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Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE): The Narrative of SLIFE Women in Minnesota and Their Future

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Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE): The Narratives of SLIFE
Women in Minnesota and Their Future

A DISSERTATION PROPOSAL SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, LEADERSHIP AND COUNSELING OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF ST. THOMAS

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

By

Melanie Bocken Keillor

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

2018


UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS, MINNESOTA

Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE): The Narrative of SLIFE
Women in Minnesota and Their Future

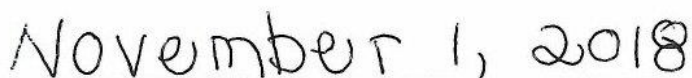
We certify that we have read this dissertation and approved it as adequate in scope and quality. We have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects, and that any and all revision required by the final examining committee have been made.

Dissertation Committee



Sarah J. Noonan, EdD, Committee Chair

Thomas Fish, EdD, Committee Member

Aura Wharton-Beck, EdD, Committee Member

Final Approval Date

ABSTRACT

Using narrative inquiry within the qualitative research tradition, a study of eight students with limited or interrupted education (SLIFE) women and eight teachers was conducted to examine how traumatic experiences and cultural shock affected the educational access, achievement and future goals of SLIFE women. The study revealed SLIFE women experienced various forms of trauma, including violence and extreme poverty. Trauma affected their mental health, efforts to settle in the U.S., their educational achievement, and future goals. Grief and loss accompanied them on their journey. Entry and settlement in the United States also posed new challenges due to language differences and cultural shock. Another large concern involved the substantial differences in the SLIFE women's educational background as compared to their U.S. peers. The teachers of SLIFE women recognized the educational system was unprepared to meet SLIFE women's needs. Kim (2001) identified a three-step process with regard to cultural shock, including stress, adaptation, and renewal. All eight participants experienced challenges due to language barriers and a lack of meaningful opportunities for integration and intercultural change. Freire's (1984, 2000) humanizing pedagogy was used to analyze how to support the needs of SLIFE women in a participatory and organized way. This included developing the whole person, while using dialogue and problem-based learning to discuss perspectives and uncover oppression. Recommendations included the development of mental health services, mentorships, improvements in teaching preparation programs, and changes in educational programming for SLIFE women.

Keywords: SLIFE, humanizing pedagogy, cross-cultural adaptation, trauma, immigrant education, refugee education, teacher preparation, ELL

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My educational journey has provided me hours of reading, writing, and reflection, opportunities to study under academic experts, and relationships with fellow learners. Usually my enthusiasm for school drove me to continue my education. There were other times the road to my doctorate was long and difficult. I reached my destination because of the people who joined me on my journey.

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Thank you especially to the SLIFE women who shared their stories, traumas, experiences, and hopes. Their willingness to share leaves me amazed by their determination and resiliency. The United States is so lucky to have you. Thank you to the Washington teachers who were willing to be vulnerable as they shared the struggles of teaching SLIFE women and

ideas for improvement. Thank you to all teachers working hard to meet the needs of every one of their students.

Finally, thank you to my family. Each of you played a role in my educational journey. Your patience, editing, extra help with daily work, and belief in me is what kept me going when this adventure seemed insurmountable. I hope the stories of these women inspires you as much as you inspired me. You can do anything.

She believed she could and she did.

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CHAPTER ONE: STUDENTS WITH LIMITED OR INTERRUPTED FORMAL EDUCATION (SLIFE): THE NARRATIVE OF SLIFE WOMEN IN MINNESOTA AND THEIR FUTURE

As a young child in rural Indiana, I remember my fascination as the missionaries brought photographs and artifacts from faraway places and I fantasized about traveling and interacting with people from distant lands. When I entered a large suburban high school, I dreamed of living in foreign lands learning and embracing cultures different than my own. During my college years, my dreams seemed unreachable and I set aside my hopes of living among different languages, cultures, and people. I fell in love, married, and began life in the Midwest. Yet still my passion for other people and cultures remained in my heart.

I began my career working in the educational field two decades ago. I desired to serve students and families and provide needed support and schooling. I hoped my work would open the possibilities for each child's future. Believing education provides an opportunity to minimize "gaps," I dedicated myself to providing rigorous, well-rounded experiences for my students. I believe in equity, social justice, and serving students by focusing on the needs of students and families marginalized in the United States. As an educational leader, I also wish to encourage and mentor my colleagues to foster their work with underserved students. I received an assignment to coordinate the English Language Learner (ELL) program in my district which serviced 250 students in 2015. My old dreams of going to places with different cultures came to me in the Midwest.

Professionally I worked with ELL students as a teacher and leader within an elementary setting. My new position required me to focus my work on supporting ELL in Pre-K through grade 12 settings. I quickly focused my energy on research and best practices to serve ELL students by reading books, and attending conferences and workshops to gain a better understanding of the research regarding best practices to support the needs of the ELL

students. Early in my research I learned about a certain group of English Language learners, students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE). SLIFE identify as 14 years and older and at least two academic years behind their peers. Many possess very little formal education or have lived in circumstances where no formal education was available. I discovered SLIFE represented the growing population of middle and high school ELL students Minnesota. I met these students and they told me about their lives. I heard harrowing stories of teenagers, mostly refugees, who hoped to find safety and a better life in the United States. These students left everything behind, travelled through unthinkable circumstances, and finally made it to Minnesota. They all shared the same hope regarding education; a hope the education system could prepare them for their new home.

The teachers and I discovered SLIFE often could not read or write in their home language, and still needed to learn English. Most high schools placed these students among their peers, yet frequently SLIFE's English skills were limited, and they lacked academic skills beyond primary grades. I witnessed students who did not understand the concepts of addition, enrolled in Physics courses, or given the book *To Kill a Mockingbird*, without any ability to read the text. I immediately felt compassion for these students and dedicated efforts to find the best ways to support them as they prepared to transition into their new country's workforce. My study concerns their experiences, including the trauma encountered as refugees, their struggle to learn as new immigrants, and their transition to adult life. In the next section I describe the importance of my study to the field, and its potential to raise awareness of the needs of SLIFE in educational settings.

Statement of the Problem, Purpose and Significance

Kofi Annan, former Secretary General to the United Nations, said, “Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family” (World Bank Conference, 1997, p. 1). Yet, currently the United States school system is ill prepared to serve immigrant teens who continue to arrive at an unprecedented rate. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2016), 65.3 million people (1 in 113 worldwide) were forcibly displaced from their homeland due to conflict or persecution. The UNHCR in 2016 reported 8.6 million newly displaced people worldwide in a 2015 study, more than a 10 percent increase. This is equal to the population of Tajikistan. Over 66,500 refugees resettled in the United States in 2015. The nation's immigrant population (documented and undocumented) hit a record high of 42.1 million in the second quarter, an increase of 1.7 million from the same quarter the previous year (Zeigler & Camarota, 2017, para. 2). The Migration Policy Institute (2018) estimated 452,000 foreign-born residents lived in Minnesota in 2018. This included an estimate of 46,000 students under 18 (para 1). Many of these students speak languages other than English. As the number of immigrant students continues to rise, schools continue to struggle to provide effective English instruction and staffing.

Students 14 and older, and more than two years behind their age-level peers academically, identify as students with limited or interrupted formal education or SLIFE (Minn. Stat. § 124D.59, Subd. 2a). A majority of SLIFE also identify as non-native English speakers with low or no literacy in their native or home language (DeCapua, 2016). Students with “limited” education possess very little academic preparation for school and struggle to learn. The only educational materials available in many non-westernized communities consist of paper and pencil or a slate (Suarez-Orozco, 1999). The teacher -the only one with a textbook - provides

the content knowledge, and students learn through memorization and recitation. SLIFE differ regarding the amount of information learned, academic skills developed, and their previous and current engagement to education. The Minnesota Department of Education estimates currently between 15,000 and 25,000 SLIFE exist in our schools (Michael Bowles, personal communication, November 14, 2016). Because this growing group of students needs a great deal of understanding and support, an urgent need exists to understand their experiences (often involving varying degrees of trauma) and how those experiences affect their education. My focus is on SLIFE women because they often face even more challenges than young SLIFE men in the United States. These young women have to navigate between multiple clashing cultures that see women's roles very differently, causing women SLIFE to struggle with the expectations and obligations of women in both their native culture and in the new culture.

This research amplified young adult students' voices so educational professionals may begin to understand the plight of many of these newcomers. Teachers not only need to fill the extreme academic gaps of these teenage students, but also demonstrate a genuine concern for the emotional and cultural needs of each student (Gahungu, Gahungu, & Luseno, 2011). Students with limited or interrupted education experience higher levels of extreme violence and trauma making it difficult to conform to expectations. For women with limited or interrupted education, the hope of an improved life holds many seemingly impenetrable. Navigating between multiple cultures is part of creating the future of many women. A lack of English language skills, gender and cultural barriers, a need to support the family's immediate needs, poverty, and limited career skills make the future seem bleak (Abada & Tenkorang, 2009; Lee & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2011; Naji, 2012; Okwako, 2011). Listening to students allows educators to understand their experiences and view of the future, and learn how to best meet students' needs, particularly the

needs of SLIFE women. My research provided a platform for SLIFE women to share their life experiences. Educators may increase their empathy and develop an understanding how best to serve SLIFE women by listening to their stories.

Research Questions

I adopted the following research questions: How do SLIFE women experience and make meaning of their interrupted education experiences as new immigrants? How do experiences of trauma and resettlement influence their future educational and career opportunities in Minnesota?

Overview of Chapters

I introduced my study and described my rationale and motive for choosing SLIFE women in this chapter. My study focused on SLIFE women, including their experiences of trauma, challenges in resettlement, and future educational goals. I describe the findings from a review of literature regarding SLIFE, organizing it into five sections in Chapter 2. At the end of this chapter I describe the theoretical frameworks used to analyze my content review, including Kim's theory of cross-cultural adaptation (1998, 2001) and Freire's humanizing pedagogy (1970, 1985, 1998, 2001). I used these theories to analyze the experiences of SLIFE in Chapter 7.

I describe the methods used to conduct my research in Chapter 3. I adopted qualitative methods and narrative inquiry within the qualitative tradition (Bogden & Biklen, 2007; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Creswell, 2013; Maynes et al., 2008; Spanbaeur, 2000). After introducing my methodology, I then describe the required Institutional Review Board permissions and guidelines I followed throughout my research. These protections involved the way I recruited and selected participants, both SLIFE women and teachers working with SLIFE. After identifying the processes used in data collection and analysis, I address issues such as

reliability and validity in qualitative research, provide a reflexive statement, and end with a discussion of ethical considerations. Following the methods chapter, I describe my findings in Chapters 4-6.

In Chapter 4, I describe SLIFE women's experiences living in their native countries and their journeys to the United States. Chapter 5 discusses the educational experiences of SLIFE women. I describe SLIFE women's personal stories of their educational backgrounds and experiences in schools in the United States. Next, I describe the teachers' backgrounds in education and the challenges they face and what they notice SLIFE face. I also discuss systemic expectations in the US educational department for all SLIFE. Finally, I discuss opportunities and strategies SLIFE women and teachers find helpful.

Chapter 7 describes the findings through cross-cultural adaptation theory and humanizing pedagogy. Chapter 8 summarizes my findings and I discuss implications for supporting SLIFE women in the United States educational system. I also recommend changes that will impact SLIFE women. I end with recommendations for further research and my study's limitations. I hope to inform educators about a growing population of students entering the United States educational system.

Definition of Terms

Continued oppression - the use of power or authority in an unjust manner

Coyote - a person who smuggles Latin Americans over the United States border

Culturally relevant or responsive teaching – pedagogy intended to help students appreciate and celebrate their cultures of origin while gaining knowledge of and fluency in at least one other culture

Displaced populations - a group of people who must leave their homes, usually due to events such as an earthquake, flood, threat or conflict

English Language Learner (ELL) - a person who is learning English language in addition to his or her native language.

Feminist migration - intersection of feminist theory and immigration theory

Immigrant – a person who comes to live permanently in another country.

Literacy - the ability to read and write

Refugee - people outside their country of nationality who are unable or unwilling to return to that country because of persecution or well-founded fear of persecution.

Students with limited or informal education (SLIFE) - Students 14 and over, more than two years behind their age level peers academically.

Transnational – Representing two or more nationalities.

WIDA - World-Class instructional design and Assessment consortium

W -APT – Language academic placement test provided by WIDA

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

An influx of students with limited or interrupted formal education only began to impact the United States education system in the last decade. My study captures the stories and experiences of SLIFE women, their educational experiences and future educational and career opportunities. While the SLIFE population is a new phenomenon, and limited research exists on the educational needs of this group of students, I found related literature regarding displaced populations entering the United States. Because most SLIFE also experience displacement, the practices and experiences of displaced populations found in the related research apply in similar ways to the experiences of SLIFE. Five themes emerged from my review of the literature: (1) background and history of immigrant and refugee students in United States schools; (2) ELL programs and services; (3) the academic needs of SLIFE; (4) adapting to cultural differences; and (5) lack of employment and career opportunities for SLIFE.

My literature review begins with an historical description of displaced peoples and their relocation to the United States and Minnesota. Next, I describe my findings from the literature concerning the challenges experienced by many immigrant and refugee students both in their home countries and once they have arrived in the United States. I address specific obstacles these students face in their new educational environment and the consequences for family members as family roles change. I also describe the current structures in place in United States educational system for immigrant students in need of learning the English language. I explore current scholarly literature regarding research specific to the challenges of SLIFE and immigrant women as they experience cultural differences. Finally, I report on the findings of future employment and career possibilities for SLIFE women.

Immigrants and Refugees

In this section, I explore immigrants and refugees in the United States. I begin by describing the United States history of immigrants and refugees. Next, I describe the realities of displaced populations who identify as immigrants and refugees in the United States today. Finally, I examine the challenges of new immigrants and refugees such as discrimination, physical and mental health, family structures, and gender.

Beginning in the 16th century, Europeans flocked to the United States in search of freedom and opportunities, many of the same reasons modern immigrants come to the United States. Many immigrants fleeing to the United States during the 1980s originated from communist countries. The 1980 Refugee Act provided asylum to immigrants and refugees from a variety of regimes, allowing them to emigrate when undergoing political turmoil (Njue & Retish, 2010).

According to the National Immigration Forum (Cepla, 2018), in 2017, 54,000 refugees were resettled in the United States, a decline of 31,000 from the previous year (para.5). These 2017 refugees, displaced due to violence and war mainly in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, and Burma, first settled in refugee camps in their neighboring countries. Living conditions at the camps were bleak. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2016) recommended each refugee receive more than 2,100 calories per day, but often camps fall short of this standard (para. 3). More than half of the refugee camps in the world are unable to provide the recommended daily water minimum of 20 liters of water per person per day (para. 2). Violence, lack of sanitation, and disease permeated the camps (Rawlence, 2017).

Other immigrants who enter the United States come from Latin America. While there is not a reliable record of the number of people who cross into the United States at its southern border, these immigrants leave their homes because of poverty, domestic and family violence, the threat of violence from drug cartels, or pressure from gangs (Leutert, 2018, UNHCR, 2016). Even the journey across the borders has a risk of violence. Doctors Without Borders (2017) noted that 68 percent of the migrants it provided services for in Mexico “had been the victim of a crime during the journey” (p.5). Despite these risks, crossing the United States border seemed the only choice in survival.

The United States has historically welcomed displaced peoples through legal immigration, undocumented immigration, and refugee relocation (United States Department of State, retrieved 2018, para. 1). Since 1975, the United States has accepted more than two million refugees for resettlement (Haines & Rosenblum, 2010; Koyama, 2013). The term “refugees” was defined in 1967 by the United Nations Protocol on Refugees as: “Those people outside their country of nationality who are unable or unwilling to return to that country because of persecution or well-founded fear of persecution” (Yakushko et al., 2008, p. 367).

The resettlement locations of these displaced populations have changed over the past two decades. Historically, immigrants relocated in large cities within ethnic communities. Today, many displaced people avoid traditional migrant gateway cities such as New York, New York; Boston, Massachusetts; Miami, Florida; Chicago, Illinois; Houston, Texas; and Los Angeles, California. Instead immigrants moved to suburbs, small cities, towns, and rural areas mostly in the Midwestern and Southeastern United States (Marrow, 2011; Waters & Jiménez, 2005). Mattessich and Wilder Research Center (2000) found that Minnesota is home to many

immigrants from East Africa and Southeast Asia. These newly-established communities continue to grow.

Settling into a new culture as an immigrant is difficult and requires perseverance. Immigrants must navigate a new culture, establish a strong community, create new networks, live within two cultures, learn a new language, and find pride in their accomplishments (Exposito, 2012). These populations initially struggled with disorientation, experiencing culture shock. Students experienced cultural differences in school ranging from clothing to lunch food to cultural celebrations. Others experienced bullying, including verbal and physical abuse. Losing friends, not knowing the language or culture, and adjustment difficulties can overwhelm and adversely affect confidence (Lange, 2015; Oikonomidou, 2014). The parents of these students faced similar challenges to their confidence. An Iraqi mother explained, “So the parenting was very different... from what I learned to do... I start to find out that I am not a good mom. I am very confused. I was not knowing what to do.” (Lange, 2015, p. 634).

Various immigrant groups often experienced disadvantages more than other U.S. marginalized populations. They struggled with post-traumatic stress, language barriers, and the ambivalence or outright hostility of some United States citizens toward them. Since 1990, most displaced populations have fled war and violence. They arrived at the United States in a state of poverty and with limited education and vocational skills (Koyama, 2013). During the migration process, challenges continued due to issues associated with admission to the country (e.g. border crossings), leaving loved ones, and legal status once they arrived. Immigrants leave behind friends, family, and an entire way of life (Malsbary, 2014).

Not only are survivors healing from difficult experiences leaving their home countries, once in the United States, they enter the American sociological ecosystem and face challenges in “race, ethnicity, class, immigration, economics, politics, religion, and society” (Hanes & Rosenblum, 2010, p. 382). Although America is outwardly characterized as being culturally and racially diverse, the prevailing conceptualization of “being” American is typically being White or Western (Goodwin, 2010). The response or level of tolerance toward immigrants ranges from positive feelings and a belief in equality between immigrants and Americans to outright discrimination (Cote & Erickson, 2009).

The stresses on the immigrant not only relate to the aforementioned barriers, but also the experiences of intolerance and racism in the educational system itself. Immigrant children are eligible to enroll in United States schools. The *Plyler v. Doe* decision by the United States Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in 1982 guaranteed public education for all, including undocumented children (Clark-Kasimu, 2015). In fact, thirty percent of Minnesota’s urban public high school populations identified as immigrants (Minnesota Department of Education, 2016, p. 12). Many of these immigrants find themselves in segregated, impoverished, and conflict-ridden schools because displaced people usually live at low socioeconomic levels and experience ethnic and linguistic isolation (Freeman & Freeman, 2009). These children lived in hostile environments that are “underperforming economically” (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). Many immigrants are concentrated in high-poverty areas with low-performing schools, and face limited access to necessary resources, services, and qualified teachers (DeCapua, Smathers, & Tang, 2007).

Patel, Tabb, Strambler, and Eltareb (2015) found the strongest predictor of adjustment of an immigrant adolescent depended on the amount of discrimination faced. Immigrant youth

want to feel successful in these challenging and complex worlds and use their cultural and linguistic resources to navigate and belong (Malsbary, 2014). Learning the norms of a dominant culture with a “pervasive dislike of the newcomer” (p. 22), teenagers must integrate while maintaining identity. Without the sustaining relationships and social roles in their previous culture, it becomes even more difficult to navigate their new culture (Suarez-Orozco, 1999). According to Gahungu, Gahungu, and Luseno (2010), the influx of 18-year-old and older immigrants without an elementary education background presented social and economic security problems. Many young immigrants feel the pressure to drop out of school and join the workforce to support their families at home and abroad.

Their immigration experience takes a toll on the physical and mental health of adolescents as well. A study by Harris, Perreira, and Lee (2009) found that foreign-born teens held the lowest rates of obesity, but these rates grow larger and increase rapidly in each generation. Due to the living conditions and structure of their daily lives, immigrant children’s ability to engage in physical activities is often limited (Booth, Pinkston, & Poston, 2005). Eighty to ninety percent of refugee children experienced insufficient food for long periods of time, which increases the risk of malnutrition and stunting (Perreira & Ornelas, 2011, p. 209). Refugee children often suffered from diarrheal disease, fractures, acute physical problems, chronic health problems, fungal and parasitic infections, and lead poisoning (p. 198). Access to health care substantially influenced the physical and emotional health of immigrant children. Frequently, immigrant parents delay or forgo care for the children due to health care limitations (p. 211).

These immigrant populations also endured extreme psychological hardships such as: witnessing murders or mass killings, enduring forced labor, living in refugee camps, separating

from family, waiting in detention centers, and navigating the justice system. Suarez-Orozco (1999) sampled 400 participants and found 80% of the children had been separated from one or both parents for periods of several months to several years (p. 4). Life preceding their migration proved difficult and some children experienced difficulties during travel such as being smuggled into the country, being assaulted, or experiencing severe hunger.

Once here, the socio-emotional needs of immigrants continued to be difficult as many felt isolated (Kugler, Price, & Center for Health and Health Care, 2009; Perreira & Ornelas, 2011). The mental health needs of immigrant and refugee students frequently remained unidentified. They developed violent outbursts, experienced heightened “fight or flight” response, suffered from depression, or other emotional and behavioral issues (Kugler & Price, 2009). Because of the ongoing conflict in Somalia, many immigrants frequently experienced severe trauma before emigrating. These experiences often linked to physical, social, and psychological difficulties such as post-traumatic stress disorder. Fazel, Wheeler, and Danesh’s (2005) study found approximately one in ten Somali refugees experienced PTSD, one in 20 experienced depression, and one in 25 experienced a generalized anxiety disorder (p. 189). But, with the Somali community, mental illness is something shameful, therefore affected youth may not get the support they need (Schuchman & McDonald, 2011).

Many immigrant students desired to “be somebody” because of their parents’ sacrifice and wanted to assist those back in their country of origin. Yet with language barriers, discrimination, interrupted learning, marginalization, low income, low performing schools, and limited resources these hopes often seem unrealistic. These disappointed aspirations as well as a hostile reception to a new environment may lead to distrust, suspicion, and anger (Sarr & Mosselson, 2010; Suárez-Orozco 1999). If some immigrants became academically successful

and shed their “refugeeness” (p. 556), they found they lost part of their identity (Sarr & Mosselson, 2010).

Family structures shift, and family leaders may be demoted because of migration. Parents frequently work several jobs, and this makes them less available to their children. Yet, parents feel fiercely protective of their children and concerned about the perceived dangers of becoming too “Americanized” (Suarez-Orozco, 1999, p. 5). Families remain far from disinterested. “These refugee parents resettled here for their children. They are fully invested in their children’s future” (Kugler & Price, 2009, p. 3).

“When an immigrant child finally sits at her desk in her new classroom a world of possibilities can potentially open” (Potter, 2001). Yet a variety of barriers may prevent immigrant women from receiving an equitable education. Feminist migration research found several gender patterns that lead to different immigrant experiences for women compared to men (Nawyn, 2010). Research proves home cultural norms contributed to greater influence over immigrant women’s outcomes. The structures in the home and country of origin also contribute to gender dynamics as well as policies and laws (Nawyn, 2010). While some believe equality exists in the United States, continued emphasis on women’s issues needs to be implemented (Niskode-Dossett, Pasque, & Errington Nicholson, 2011). Encouraging these immigrant women in their American education provides enormous potential to opportunity.

Immigration comes with rewards as well. Students in Oikonomidoy’s (2014) study discussed their appreciation for free education, technology, learning a new language and culture, making new friends, and future possibilities. Yet, for most immigrants, challenges continued to make resettlement difficult. I will describe the United States educational programs and services designed for English language learners (ELL) in the next section.

ELL Programs and Services

In 2015, an estimated 4.8 million English language learners lived in the United States (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2016, para. 1). This section includes a description of various methods used to meet the needs of English language learner populations, and an explanation of the continued obstacles they face while enrolled in the United States education system such as continued oppression and misidentification of their needs. Finally, I will examine research that highlights the need for academic systems to develop culturally relevant learning experiences for their diverse classrooms.

Currently, school districts use a variety of models to meet the needs of ELL students. The models include: 1) Pull-out model; a small portion of the day English Language learners get pulled out of content area classrooms for ELL instruction. Unfortunately, this method frequently causes ELL students to give up electives or opportunities to socialize with peers. 2) Push-in model; students remain in mainstream classrooms while the ELL teacher integrates English language skills into the content area using co-teaching. This method is heavily dependent on professional development and planning time for teachers. 3) After school program; this program requires additional time commitment from both teachers and students. 4) Sheltered Instruction: the ELL or content teacher modifies academic material that is more accessible and comprehensible to learners. Regardless of the model of instruction, it is essential learners collaborate, districts give teachers time to co-plan, they focus on the whole child, and the administration is supportive (DeCapua, Smathers, & Tang, 2007).

Obstacles for ELL

American public schools are, by default, culturally relevant for middle-class, (predominantly) white, (predominantly) Anglo-American students (Nykiel-Herbert,

2010). Within the American system, students socialize and sort into academic tracks valuing the input and skills of the dominant group. Okwako (2011) found the traditional role of school reproduced the status quo maintaining social inequalities. Inadequate funding and ambivalent support from federal, state and local governments make it difficult for the educational system to provide resources for students, train teachers, or upkeep programs (Roxas, 2010).

Goodwin (2010) suggested when educators neglect students' histories and do not discuss the postcolonial present, "the power to emancipate or colonize" continues (p. 311). The dominant group remains in power and those considered the "other" are never empowered. Therefore, educators fail to empower their students with tools to become critical thinkers, readers, and writers. One example of continued oppression comes from Crandall's (2013) research. The lack of African history in American schools is evidence that colonial oppression continues. Although English learners bring experiences, knowledge, histories, and insight from their homeland, they need a safe space in the United States to share what they know. The educator can provide the opportunity to "restore the history, dignity, validity, cultural contributions, and global significance" (Appleman, 2009, p. 90) of the students' backgrounds. It is evident teachers need professional development to help them understand the history of the youth they serve.

The National Center for Education statistics (2016) indicates schools serving predominantly "minority" children, including ELLs, more likely employ new, inexperienced teachers and those less likely to hold master's degrees. Roxas (2010) found in his research at a Midwestern high school that despite 25% (250) of the population at the school labeled as ELL, only one full time teacher served all students (p. 67). Lee and Hawkins (2015) expressed concern with how national, state, and local policies (regarding staffing-levels) shaped how

schools responded to English language learners in Wisconsin where school districts were given autonomy to decide educational policies. A community's attitudes towards immigrants impacted each district differently.

Norrid-Lacey and Spencer's (1999) research suggested the English learners did not appear as a priority for the administration. Despite 6% of the population identified as ELL, the researchers noticed the families of ELL students often lack power or remained silent as members of the community (p. 14). Also, the administration did not actively recruit qualified teachers or try to educate the staff on strategies for ELL success. Upon closer observation, researchers found that various expectations for certain ethnic groups and personal attitudes ranged from supportive to veiled racism. Bigelow (2010) noted, "when powerful institutions discriminate against youth based on entrenched xenophobia, racism and Islamophobia, a democratic, plural society in the making has much to lose" (p. 148).

When students enter the educational system, frequently their placement in grade levels and classes is determined by their age, rather than their educational level or English-speaking ability (Norrid-Lacey & Spencer, 1999). Instead, incoming students should be assessed in their native language. While this can be difficult, especially when hundreds of languages are represented, it is crucial to assess native literacy to truly understand a student's ability (Freeman & Freeman, 2009). For example, without accurate assessment measures, some English language learners incorrectly are referred for special education assessments while others with disabilities remain unreferred, as it is assumed their challenges relate to language acquisition (Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

ELL Supports

Many ELL students thrive in a collectivist culture, where interdependence, fostering and maintaining group relationships, and shared learning is preferred. Demands of individual accountability and homework are new concepts for many students (Gahungu, Gahungu, & Luseno, 2011). Ladson-Billings (1990, 2014) described culturally relevant or responsive teaching as a pedagogy that defies deficit-based attitudes towards marginalized students. Culturally relevant teaching refers to the “ability to help students appreciate and celebrate their cultures of origin while gaining knowledge of and fluency in at least one other culture” (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p.75). Culturally responsive pedagogy must be offered to make schools truly multicultural and ensure all students experience educational equality (Nykiel-Herbert, 2010).

Educators who teach ELL students must recognize the important role that peer-to-peer verbal interaction plays in language learning (Brown, 2013). This allows the opportunity for dialogic and reciprocal learning, a way for teachers to learn from students while they learn from us (Freire, 2000). Stewart (2015) conducted an interview where one teacher explained that activities focused on meeting the literacy needs of ELL students benefited the entire classroom. Since little time existed for teachers to adequately research multiple countries, groups, and languages, the immigrant students became the teachers and shared the knowledge needed to leverage their experiences into the curriculum.

Malsbary (2014) found that schools often overlook the tremendous resource at their disposal: dynamic transcultural and multilingual classes in which students “learn about other cultures” potentially increasing the level of multicultural democratic citizenship. Brooks et al. (2008) concluded that the most effective instructional models used a variety of approaches and

valued parents' and students' background and languages. By understanding the circumstances of the student, family, and the level of home literacy, a teacher can provide personalized assistance. Linking students' prior knowledge to new learning is widely recognized as a practice of good teachers (Dooley, 2009).

Crandall's (2013) conversations with students suggested teachers should do a better of job of listening to them. The students overwhelmingly stated the teachers who knew their personal histories were more likely to offer useful tools. Franquiz and Salazar's (2004) research found "one-size-fits-all" policies using manualized teaching programs take away the educators' opportunities to create their own way of addressing unique needs. Because English language learning teachers must do more than simply teach ELL students a new language, curriculum and systems must place value on native languages, histories, and culture.

One student in Crandall's research (2013) explained that his ELL teacher saw him as an individual and cared about his learning. However, his mainstream English teacher knew him very little and did not expect him to write. But in his ELL class, his teacher nurtured his passion about his Somali history. This inspired him to become a better writer bringing voice to his family's experiences. Bang (2011) revealed in his research that the use of home culture and language enabled students to build on prior knowledge using familiar cultural and linguistic resources. When the teacher involved students in meaningful activities during class, students enjoyed a similar level of satisfaction when working independently.

Providing a bridge between home and the school experience can support teachers, parents, and students by finding out about existing networks and building on resources already in place but frequently unknown or unacknowledged. Providing assistance programs to parents can benefit students and families as they learn to navigate a new culture and educational system

(Gahungu, Gahungu, & Luseno, 2011). Additionally, involving parents in course design, content, delivery, and engaging in discussions regarding their children's needs dramatically improves the prospects for these students in their new country (Hope, 2011; Kugler & Price, 2009).

Academic Needs of SLIFE

The Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success Act (LEAPS Act) passed in Minnesota in 2014. It is considered a crucial law in Minnesota's growing English language learner program. This law emphasizes an increase in support to English language learners within many state statutes. It includes the definition of which students are affected by this law (students 14 and over and more than two years behind their age level peers academically) and accountability reporting required for SLIFE. Increased support includes early childhood education, curriculum and instruction, higher education, adult education, and additional teacher licensing requirements. Districts are directed to place bilingual and multilingual seals on high school diplomas to students who demonstrate certain levels of proficiency in native languages.

These changes surprised school districts and created new challenges. Many displaced students represent highly diverse populations, including multiple languages, cultures, and nations (Malsbary, 2014). Many U.S. school districts lack adequate resources to provide the kind of remediation needed (Gahungu, Gahungu, & Luseno 2011). SLIFE struggle with reading and writing in their first language or do not possess any literacy. Faced with the task of developing conversational English skills, becoming literate in English, and gaining academic knowledge and skills to compete with native speakers, ELL students often lack academic background and knowledge of routines within an educational setting. This includes understanding of school organization, norms, structures, and culture (Freeman & Freeman, 2009). Bang (2011) notes, the

content of “secondary school curricula becomes increasingly complex” (p.410) with students at a secondary level taking courses in advanced Math, Literacy, History, and Science. SLIFE’s limited school experiences make understanding complex subjects nearly impossible.

While the ELL focus is often on English fluency, with SLIFE, many have even more basic needs. Schools must “focus on learning the basics and adapting the mainstream curriculum at secondary level” for SLIFE to achieve success (DeCapua, Smathers, & Tang, 2007, p. 42). High school students notably lack language but also print literacy, and most secondary instruction relies on print materials (Bigelow, 2010). Students with limited formal education base their learning on the spoken word, called orality (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011). Teachers of students with interrupted schooling need to teach language but also literacy, which is a new experience for some secondary educators (Dooley, 2009). Teachers must demonstrate genuine concern for the emotional and cultural needs of resettled students by supporting them through health services, social services, and community collaboration (Gahungu, Gahungu, & Luseno, 2011).

The first part of this section focused on the challenges within the current system in meeting SLIFE needs. Next, I examine the benefits of adjusting the view of SLIFE through their competency rather than their deficiency. Finally, I share research relating to the paradigm shift students must undergo in their new educational system.

Challenges

Most SLIFE face several challenges. According to Exposito (2012) they face the challenge of entering unfamiliar territory where cultural signposts no longer occur. They struggle to learn English and access critical information. They endure the loss of family and

friends in their home county. Amidst these difficulties, they find themselves forced to obtain strength and resourcefulness needed to push through obstacles that seem insurmountable.

Bigelow's 2010 case study found, despite a family support system, four SLIFE women's school programs and climate did not meet the young women halfway. The young women were given inadequate multi-language assessments and none of the curriculum addressed their needs. Bigelow (2010) noted how a teacher conflated economic disadvantages with cultural deficiencies. She interpreted her students' cultural and religious differences as deficiencies to be overcome. As this teacher positioned herself as an advocate for her students, she convinced other teachers to "help" the immigrant children.

Lee and Hawkins (2015) noted that both the ELL student and teacher become marginalized as they separate from the mainstream. Lee and Hawkins found across the five districts in their study, ELL and bilingual staff remained understaffed, isolated, marginalized, and difficult to recruit. Responsibility to teach the English language fell to teachers whose preparation and experience occurred in teaching foreign languages. This deficient perspective of immigrant students and a culture of low expectations perpetuate unchecked practices that lead to continued inequalities.

Educational infrastructures are not only underdeveloped, but also inconsistent (Dooley, 2009). Students need creative and individualized support, and, therefore, instruction, assessments, and curriculum should be guided by student needs. Close monitoring of student progress and coordination, cooperation, and planning should occur among all teachers. Structure and consistency should guide classrooms. Professional development opportunities for staff and teachers are crucial. Family involvement must develop. All of this requires a lot of work and

contains many layers of difficulty for both the teacher and system (Clark-Kasimu, 2015; DeCapua & Marshall, 2010; De Jesus & Antrop-González, 2006).

Because many SLIFE attend urban schools, classroom management is a higher priority for the teachers, which is a considerable responsibility. Even if the academic material is there, learning cannot happen until students feel safe, valued, and secure (Brown, 2003). Some adolescent refugees demonstrate disruptive behavior, perhaps because many SLIFE experience more distress than the average student and may not behave in school. Teachers Zimmerman-Orozco (2015) interviewed stated, “They might behave better if they know you truly care for them” (p. 51). Another teacher stated, “Sometimes they just need time to heal from the horrendous things experienced in their country or on their way here” (p. 52). Several teachers mentioned their immigrant students needed socialization and instructional activities. Because some students are older than their peers in their grade level, they often feel isolated socially and psychologically from the mainstream. Brown (2003) explored the classroom management methods effective, urban teachers use to create a safe learning environment for their multicultural students. One of those teachers explained he spent the first few weeks of school engaging the SLIFE in social games and creating relationships between school and home.

SLIFE need approaches and materials not only to help them catch up to their American peers, but also to provide basic literacy instruction (Freeman & Freeman, 2009). Many SLIFE take longer than other English language learners to become proficient because of the lack of formal education in their first language and low ability to read and write (Crandall, 2012).

The big challenge is to help SLIFE build resources for deep concepts and critical thinking from the high-school curriculum while still gathering basic reading and writing skills (Dooley, 2009). Bang (2011) saw many students were unable to complete their homework due to their

limited understanding of course materials and language barriers. This finding indicated students received insufficient instruction to do the work independently. Zimmerman-Orozco (2015) discovered the typical adolescent instinct was to conform and avoid attention by smiling, nodding, and hiding in the back of a mainstream class. This caused students to further withdraw from classroom activities and content, making it more difficult for them to succeed.

SLIFE Educational Needs

Shaughnessy (2006) found when teachers encouraged students to use their native language in the classroom and to discuss their culture, an increase in comfort level and individual pride developed. Appleman (2009) argued the aim of education in a non-colonial world is to restore “the history, dignity, validity, cultural contributions, and global significance” in the student’s cultural identity (p. 90). Creating a culturally respectful atmosphere requires professional development for teachers serving this population. Steward (2015) found there is a great deal of teachers do not know about refugees which results in inaccurate assumptions of these students. When efforts are made to engage and improve the cultural and linguistic resources of the students, both students and families feel welcomed. De Jesus and Antrop-González (2006) found the Latino students in their study emphasized the value of strong, caring social relations with each other and their teachers making them feel welcomed and valued in school. Gahungu, Gahungu, and Luseno (2011) believed it was imperative for school districts to focus on the unique political and social needs of refugee students. This support prepares SLIFE to make the right choices in an interdependent world.

If schooling can help in preparing citizens to make right choices for living in democratic, interdependent world, these teenagers who were resettled in this county need education if they are expected not to succumb to terrorist groups and other manipulative forces soliciting them to wrong causes. With no formal or career training, they have very slim chances of securing gainful employment. (p.11)

Even though SLIFE may lack formal schooling, they possess other valuable life experiences to build upon. Their lives, often shaped by pragmatic learning, suggests the wealth of information SLIFE bring to the school setting is generally not knowledge valued in formal education (Au & Kawakami, 1994; Kress, 2000; Needham, 2003). Moll and Greenberg (1990) describe insight and expertise based on daily life experiences as funds of knowledge. These funds of knowledge that SLIFE and their communities possess are central to their lives and experiences. Funds of knowledge consist of accumulated and culturally developed information and skills essential for household or individual function and wellbeing (DeCapua & Marshall, 2010, p. 163). Still, some people are unaware of these contributions and instead believe these families drain our resources. Grace Valenzuela, director of the CAC project in Portland Public Schools in Maine responds, “Immigrant and refugee parents have been able to survive extraordinary experiences in bringing their families here, yet once they are here, we disempower them” by not helping them understand how the United States system works (Kugler & Price, 2009, p.3).

One’s culture and learning paradigm are inextricably linked. Culture determines how one views and interprets the world and organizes and processes information. When differences of United States classroom expectations, routines, and procedures deviate from those of diverse students, risks of low levels of academic success can result. Since most SLIFE experiences do not include academic-style learning, they understand and interpret the world around them differently (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011). United States pedagogical practices come from culturally-based assumptions about learners and learning. Since these assumptions remain part of the mainstream culture, teachers stay unaware how much these systems affect their pedagogical practices (Cole, 1998).

A fundamental difference between SLIFE and United States educated students is the concept of knowledge for knowledge's sake. This type of knowledge finds no relevance to the SLIFE because their knowledge is in the everyday world - not detached abstractions that are logical, and hypothetical (Flynn, 2007, p. 24). SLIFE may know “the medicinal properties of plants yet classifying plants based on phyla or reproductive characteristics may be a strange and unfamiliar concept” (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011, p. 36).

Refugees often come from countries with radically different attitudes regarding teaching and learning (Brooks, 2008). Western-style students develop a “scientific” understanding of the world through classification, process analysis, comparing and contrasting, and abstract reasoning (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011; Meyer, 2000; Spring, 2008). In a study involving pre-literate Uzbek farmers, the subjects observed four objects and were instructed to eliminate the object that did not belong: hammer, saw, hatchet, and log. Each participant chose the different tools to eliminate, but each farmer participant inevitably kept the log. Luria (1976) recognized each participant found it necessary to include the log in their grouping with other tools, because it provided meaningful context.

Most students with limited formal schooling come from a collectivist orientation that prefers group work, promoting relationships and opportunities that rely on peers for learning support. Collectivist cultures value interdependence, group relations, shared responsibility, and group learning (Gahungu, Gahungu, & Luseno 2011). Students with limited or interrupted education grow accustomed to group activities, oral communication, and pragmatic knowledge. Approximately 70% of world cultures can be characterized as collectivistic (Triandis, 1989) Santos and Grossmann (2017) found while collectivistic cultures are still dominant,

individualism is increasing (para. 2). This approach does not meet the expectations of the individualistic and print-rich culture of western-style schools (Hall, 1976).

These collectivist needs remain unmet by the traditional American system of education (Freeman & Freeman, 2002; Freeman & Freeman, 2001). SLIFE come from an oral world and rely on others to access information rather than print materials. Oral native language is where they thrive (Zimmerman-Orozco, 2015). Relationships within the school and community remain essential to better understand and meet the needs of all immigrant students (Marshall & DeCapua, 2010).

Adapting to Cultural Differences

Immigrant and refugee students experience a mismatch between home and school culture. Ibarra (2001) termed feelings of isolation, confusion, disengagement, and inadequacy when students encounter the formal education system as cultural dissonance (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011). I explain the research around students who attempted to navigate this mismatch. I will show how changes in family roles impact these cultural differences. Next, I focus specifically on gender, particularly how women face understanding their identities. Losing one's first culture also creates an inner struggle for many dislocated persons. Finally, I explain how transnational identity becomes a new way to identify somewhere between two different cultures.

Harlem (2010) describes cultural dissonance as "self, lost in transit" (p. 460) where the immigrant may physically leave home for a new land, but now psychologically finds difficulty integrating into the new society. This is when the new immigrant tries to define an authentic self. Many immigrant youth sense conflicts regarding whether to adopt the modern ways or maintain their traditional or home culture (Ngo, 2010; Rotich, 2011). Immigrant youth regularly

reject the traditions of their parents and try to adopt the practices of their new American peers. Many feel torn between attachment to the parental culture of origin, and the lure of the often more intriguing adolescent peer culture of America. Many aspire to join the American mainstream culture, which may or may not welcome them (Suarez-Orozco, 1999). The cultural norms practiced in their home countries, particularly those relating to gender norms, continue to shape immigrant families' lives in the United States (Smith-Hefner, 1993).

Especially difficult for parents is depending on their children to intervene on their behalf. Often these children are put in positions of power as interpreters and negotiators of family business from finances to health. These role reversals disrupt the immigrant family organization. (Chu, 1999; National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention, 2004). Frequently, the newly arrived children become the family experts in the ways of the new society. They act as linguistic and cultural translators upon whom their parents become highly dependent (Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Perry's (2009) work found young women from Yemen read and paid parents' bills written in English, took care of school materials for younger siblings while signing their parents' names, and memorized Arabic texts at home to prove to their parents they held onto their heritage. However, while in school, the young women needed to balance the strict religious practices of home with the more liberal freedoms discussed in classes about music and movies. They needed to monitor their behavior when it became too Westernized and "too risky" (Perry, p. 138).

Gender

Family socialization is a strongly gendered aspect of immigrants' lives. The studies of Feliciano (2009), Lopez (2003), Qin-Hillard, (2003) and Zhou and Bankston (2001) established immigrant parents hold different expectations for their daughters than for their sons. Lee's

(2001) study revealed while some parents urge their daughters to finish high school before getting married, similarly some push their daughters to get married while still in high school. These different parental expectations for women - early marriages, cultural and religious factors, the involvement of mother - limit immigrant women's experiences at school and their future lives (Okwako, 2011).

Immigrant young women's activities outside the home become heavily monitored and controlled because the fear of becoming "Americanized" was synonymous with becoming sexually promiscuous. Adolescent women often see these restrictions as "unfair" and "oppressive" and it may cause family conflicts. St. John (2009) found that many of the young women studied wrestled between a home culture of behaving as good Muslim daughters, sisters, and mothers, and the Western school culture of American youth.

Many Latino students from the Potter and the Educational Development Center (2001) interviewed found themselves torn between loyalty to family and community and a culture focused on individuality, private ownership, and competition. Saroub's (2005) research found Yemeni women straddling two worlds - home and school. The differences in expectations between these two spaces caused tension. While gender played a role, factors such as religion, family background and ethnicity also created a perception for how the women experienced school. Okwako (2011) realized immigrant and refugee women face numerous challenges because of their multiple subordinate statuses such as their race, ethnicity, gender, immigration status, class, and language.

Useful data regarding girls and women are often lost due to inadequate research approaches. Okwako (2011) expressed concern at the failure to acknowledge the intersection of girls' multiple identities (religion, class, culture, race, academic level). This deficiency leads to

objectifying, excluding, and silencing girls and young women in society (Hussein, Berman, Poletti, Lougheed-Smith, Ladha, Ward, & Macquarie, 2006). Muhammad (2015) found the recognition of girls' histories and identities empowers them. Their personal expression stretches across multiple identities relating to ethnicity, gender, and community regarding warfare, violence, and social injustices.

However, marriage rather than education is seen as the most probable path to social mobility in many refugees' home countries. Domestic skills such as managing the household, assisting with agricultural work, and animal caretaking enable women to contribute to the immediate needs of their own families. Opportunities for social mobility generally exist through marriage, which explains why the focus of primary training involves household tasks (Froerer, 2012). Schooling is often seen as unnecessary. Although it does not necessarily prevent girls from learning domestic skills such as weaving, formal education can be perceived as opposition to morality and honor (Naji, 2012). Gahungu, Gahungu, and Luseno (2011) discovered southern Morocco girls' education in weaving took precedence over formal schooling because weaving is the most common skill and gateway to social mobility in that culture.

This pressure for marriage continues to create cultural challenges to women once they arrive in the United States. Mireles and Romo (2014) found traditional Latino culture emphasizes the importance of motherhood and marriage in Latina's lives. This leads to social pressures to form a family and bear children at young ages. The researchers posited that daughters receive less support for academic and career achievement than they do for motherhood and marriage. Mireles and Romo found that more communication between mother and daughter led to greater achievement orientation in the young woman.

Losing Culture

A social stigma exists for some immigrants if they learn to speak English too well, and are therefore mistaken for being from a culture other than their home culture. Mislabeling a person is a threat to one's group or self-identity. Keeping specific characteristics like language remains particularly important for many immigrants (Norrid-Lacey & Spencer, 1999). Yakushko, Backhaus, Watson, Ngaruiya, and Gonzalez (2008) discovered that integrating into dominant cultural norms in terms of social interactions, work attitudes, and other customs become essential not only for immigrants securing a job but seeking out opportunities for promotion. Yet losing connection to one's culture may result in isolation from the community. Exposito (2012) interviewed a refugee woman who learned English quickly and as a result, was employed quickly. Her employment challenged cultural norms and gender roles, placing her in conflict with the men in her family. Eventually, the family realized the benefit of her status and they accepted her new role.

Abada and Tenkorang (2009) discovered distinct challenges facing second-generation children in balancing their family and cultural traditions with norms and values of the new society. While some immigrant women pursue educational and career aspirations, many remain focused on goals such as marriage and family. Attachment to their immigrant communities and status impacts the complexity of expectations immigrant children face. It affects social and cultural norms and gender-role expectations. A young girl in Gonick's (2007) research believed she had to negotiate the demands of her parents' 'old-fashioned' values and her new ideas of femininity that she wanted to make her own. Perreira and Ornelas (2011) found students who acculturate at younger ages develop greater language acquisition and better educational outcomes. However, because these young migrants find themselves caught between two worlds,

the cultures of their parents and the cultures of their new communities, they tend to adopt more risky health behaviors such as alcohol use, smoking, and early sexual activity than peers who immigrated at older ages (Tolbert Kimbor, 2009).

According to Malsbary (2014) many of today's immigrant youth desire to belong to diverse communities and achieve multicultural citizenship. These youths wish to acquire transnational cultures and identities. Educators taking the opportunity to learn the ways students align with transnational life in the United States will know better how they support these students. Bhabha (1994) identifies the third space as a flexible zone where multiple identities engage.

If one's primary culture teaches a specific set of behaviors for one construct and the adopted culture specifies other behaviors, the socially integrated individual will pre-consciously change perspectives to replicate what is expected in that culture. Sapiro (2011) suggests frame switching can become a consciously cognizant process when the bicultural individual becomes aware of his or her own frame-switching schema. "Frame switching is a healthy response to locating one's identity within a new cultural ecological framework that includes interpersonal, communal, and socially constructed relationships" (Sapiro, 2011 p.71).

According to Black (2009) immigrant youth's access to technology in the United States affords them opportunities for greater communication with communities they left behind. Black explained,

As many adolescents socialize and spend a great deal of time in such online, global social settings—the process of relocation for many immigrant youths also takes place at least partially in technologically-mediated environments such as online discussion boards, social networking sites, fan communities, and video gaming environments. (p. 689)

Culture is fragmented as groups compete for power and recognition within colliding, occupied, and overlapping cultural spaces (Rutherford, 1990). Transcultural capital is "the

strategic use of knowledge, skills and networks acquired by migrants through connections with their country and cultures of origin which are made active at their new places of residence” (Triandafyllidou, 2009, p. 95). Crandall (2012) identifies these adolescents as people who negotiate national and family cultures with new cultures of the Western world. These young people exist between ethnic identities of family and school communities. Refugee youth often live between their nationalities, histories, home life, and their social life and schooling in a new society. Rather than shedding one’s cultural attributes and ethnic identity for successful integration, immigrants unpack the characteristics that favor the host society (Zhou, 1997).

Lack of Career and Employment Opportunities

Koyama (2013) found that learning English is the first step of social mobility: “The goal of resettlement isn’t only education. It is getting them [immigrants] into jobs so that they can support themselves and their families” (p. 958). Success within the classroom often determines post-secondary success, but I wanted to discover if any research existed showing possible career and employment opportunities for SLIFE. Therefore, I examined research concerning what immigrants had to have to gain employment, the difficulty of transitioning from their pre-immigrant lives, and whether gender differences affected their ability to find a job.

DeCapua, Smathers, and Tang (2007) discovered many SLIFE live in concentrated high-poverty neighborhoods and low-performing schools that provided limited resources or qualified teachers. Students often feel pressured to help their families living in poverty by dropping out of school and joining the workforce. As a result, education goals such as obtaining a GED or attending community college are delayed. The prospect of gainful employment and earnings for foreign-born youths who do not finish high school significantly decreases (Fry, 2005; Gahungu, Gahungu, & Luseno, 2011).

To secure gainful employment, according to Hope (2011), immigrants had to have three types of capital: economic, social, and transcultural. Economic capital refers to the family possessions and educational environment a person may possess. Social capital concerns the networks that build up around an individual as well as resources provided for support and practical help. Transcultural capital is the knowledge, skills and networks acquired by immigrants to navigate the new country. Yakushko, Backhaus, Watson, Ngaruiya, and Gonzalez (2008) found that a person without legal documentation would have a difficult time finding lucrative employment. Kayama (2013) noted in some cases, employers did not like employees to learn too much English. The employers wanted them to know just enough English to do the work, thus limiting their social mobility.

Many immigrants' pre-refugee way of life differed substantially from their post-settlement circumstances. Skills and occupational knowledge may not transfer to the American employment force. Certifications, degrees, and licenses often stay unrecognized, and previous social status and educational history offer no advantages (Exposito, 2012; Koyama, 2013). Regardless of the level of education or status of the country of origin, some immigrants remain invisible in their new home, disrespected, and not well represented in their new culture (Sarr and Mosselson, 2010; Brooks et al, 2008).

Feliciano and Rumbuatu (2005) discovered immigrant women seeking employment experienced fewer educational opportunities and modest occupational goals compared to immigrant males. These realities make women more likely to get married and bear children at an early age instead of pursuing a college education. Single women gain two and a half times more likelihood of enrolling and completing a bachelor's degree than married or cohabiting women (Feliciano & Rumbuatu, 2005, p.1106). This suggests that women who remain single stay more

focused on educational goals. Adolescent girls, who become pregnant before high school graduation, had lower educational aspirations and less confidence in completing high school than those who did not. Marital status holds little effect on educational attainment for men (p.1106). Some men from poor families tend to struggle in school, which often results in suspensions, and therefore they become less likely to meet high occupational or college expectations. These vulnerabilities keep both men and women from fulfilling their dreams or entertaining high hopes for the future (Young, Turner, Denny, & Young, 2004).

I found limited research specifically focused on SLIFE. However, as this population continues to grow throughout the United States, educators need greater awareness regarding the plight of these hidden, marginalized students. My research may lead to greater understanding, knowledge, empathy, and change for these students, particularly the plight of women by learning about and featuring their personal stories.

Theoretical Framework

As I explored the limited research on SLIFE, it became evident that among the many challenges every immigrant faces, each person needed to learn how to adapt in her own way to the new culture. These transitions seemed complex, unique, and necessary. Recognizing the necessity of some form of adaptation led me to explore various theories designed to explain this process. Kim's (1979) Cultural Theory of Adaptation identified multidimensional layers of complexity and uniqueness as each individual adapts to a new environment. Freire's Humanizing Pedagogy gives highest value to the knowledge within each individual. I chose to use this theory to consistently support the belief that the solutions to the challenges faced by SLIFE women will come from the women themselves. I adopted Kim's Cultural Theory of Adaptation to explain the struggles initially faced by SLIFE women, and then later used Freire's

theory of Humanizing Pedagogy to explore how the SLIFE women explored different options to manage their new lives.

Kim's Cultural Theory of Adaptation

Du Bois (1903) described the struggle of African Americans as an identity struggle: "One ever feels his twoness, -an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (p. 46). These experiences seem true of the immigrants struggling to maintain their identity, and yet to understand their new selves. Young Yun Kim (1979) developed the Theory of Adaptation as a framework for understanding the multi-dimensional interaction between immigrants and members of the host community (see *Figure, 1*, p. 38). The multidimensional approach offers a variety of explanations to understand how Yemeni girls' cross-cultural adaptation takes place at its own pace (Kim, 1998).

Kim's (2009) theory of cultural adaptation begins by considering the process of transition from stress, adaptation, and renewal. Those facing a difference in culture experience stress due to their desire to maintain their own culture and identity, while recognizing the need to adapt to their new environment (Kim & Gudykunst, 1988; Kim, 2009). The outcome of adaptation depends on how stress propels individuals to overcome and adapt by developing new habits. Renewal is the final stage of the process when the individual can move smoothly between two cultures.

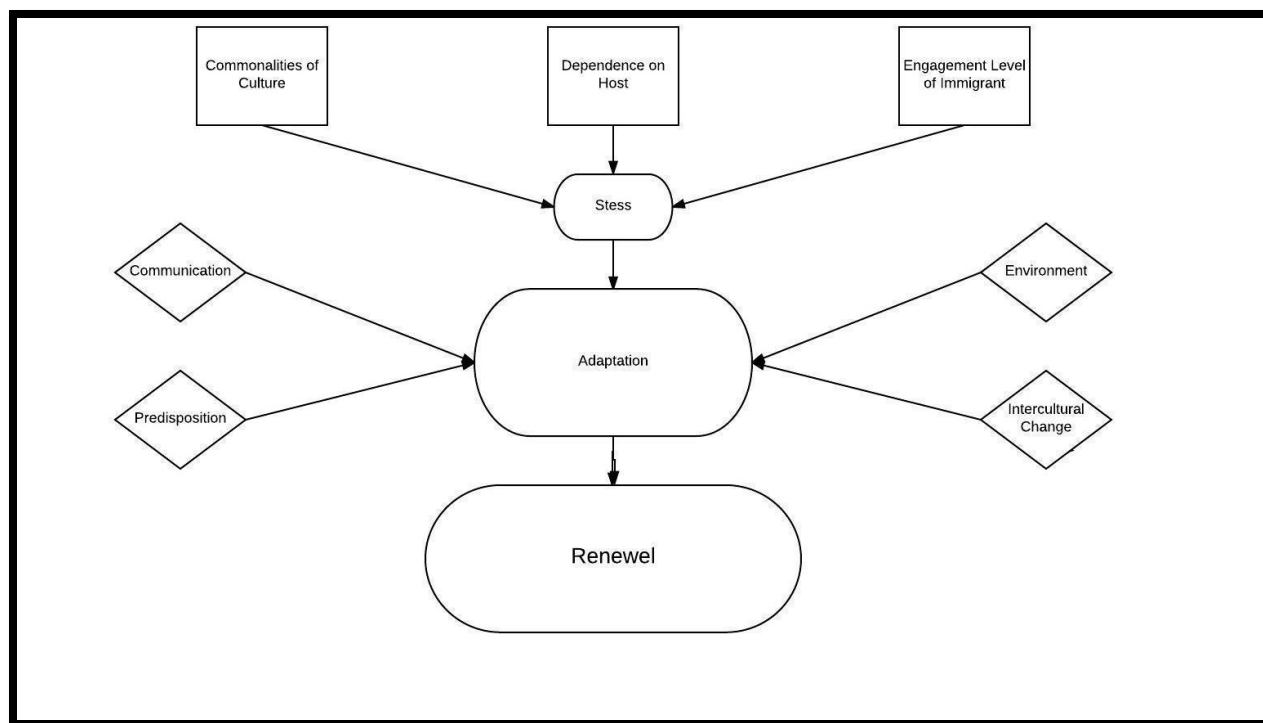


Figure 1: Kim's cross-cultural theory

According to Kim (1998), three initial conditions affect the level of stress of an immigrant: (1) the commonalities between one's primary socialization and the new culture, (2) the dependence on the host for social and physical needs, and (3) the engagement level of the host environment to the immigrant. "Cross-cultural adaptation concerns the natural human tendency to regain an internal equilibrium during adversarial environmental conditions" (p. 243). All these conditions explain why "every incidence of cross-cultural adaptation takes place at its own pace and why some individuals are more successful than others in their cross-cultural transitions" (p. 243).

Kim (1998) defined four elements of the theory of adaptation phase: (1) communication, (2) environment, (3) predisposition, and (4) intercultural change. Communication involves both interpersonal and social competence. Interpersonal competence involves a cognitive and

operational ability to understand the host's language, history, norms, mores, verbal and nonverbal behaviors. The level of competence also depends on the immigrant's willingness to adapt to these differences. Integral in the adaptation of an immigrant is how new behaviors are observed, through mass media or personal observations within the host environment. Additionally, access to communication of original cultural experiences for temporary refuge and support impacts adaptation. Prolonged reliance on original cultural experiences can also limit opportunities in the new environment.

The second element Kim (1998) described involves the environment the immigrant has entered. Much of the adaptation process is dependent on the receptiveness of the host, accessibility of the environment, openness to strangers, and the amount of pressure put on the stranger to act in accordance with cultural norms. Maintaining ethnic group strength can provide support for individual members, but it can also exert social pressure to maintain practices and discourage an active participation in the host environment.

The predisposition of the immigrant plays a significant role in cross-cultural adaptation. Mental, emotional, and motivational readiness of a person impact the understanding of the new culture and can impact adaptation. The personality of the immigrant, her openness to change, strength, and optimism also play a role.

The final element of the adaptation phase involves intercultural change. This refers to the sense and ease at which the stranger works within the host environment. It is also determined by the sense of happiness and satisfaction of one's life in the host environment. Intercultural change evolves through a gradual and unconscious transformation. Using Kim's (1998) theory of adaptation in my research helped identify where in the process the SLIFE are and conditions, elements, and predispositions impacting cultural adaption.

Cultural adaptation theory sheds light on the experiences of women SLIFE. SLIFE women experience various levels of stress as described in Kim's (1998) model. This may depend on the differences between the SLIFE woman's primary and new culture, her dependence on the new culture, and the investment made to her by the host culture. Kim's theory also assists in identifying four essential elements that assist in the SLIFE woman's adaption. Each woman's level of adaptation must consider the role communication plays in her new environment. The host environment and the SLIFE woman's interaction within it must also be examined. The predisposition or personality of each woman can also impact adaptation. Finally, understanding the SLIFE woman's sense of satisfaction assisted me in identifying the level of cultural adaptation of each woman.

Paulo Freire's Humanizing Pedagogy

Freire (1970) wrote that revolutionary (not reactionary) teachers establish a permanent relationship with students from subordinated cultures and languages. According to Freire (2000), the revolutionary teacher practices a humanizing pedagogy where the method of instruction "ceases to be an instrument by which the teachers can manipulate the students, because it expresses the consciousness of the students themselves" (p. 51). Using Freire's (2006) humanizing pedagogy theory provided the opportunity to assist in understanding how to teach SLIFE women. Humanizing pedagogy relies on relationships the researcher develops with the students while the students make meaning of their experiences and future.

Humanization is the process of becoming more fully human as "social, historical, thinking, communicating, transformative and creative persons who participate in and with the world" (Freire, 1984, p. 72). However, to become more human, people must first become conscious of their role in the world. Freire's work suggests those who are oppressed can be

liberated through consciousness of their subjugated positions. The only way to create this consciousness is to engage with the oppressed rather than impose or impart it on them. Salazar (2013) defines pedagogy as a complex philosophy, politics and practice of education. This practice is designed to provide meaningful change of marginalized students through curricular resources generated by teachers and communities to interrupt patterns of exclusion.

Freire's revolutionary approach to education is “to transform the world and to humanize it” (Freire, 1985, p. 70), to provide liberation, hope, and transformation. Bartolomé (1994) suggested humanizing pedagogy builds on sociocultural realities of students’ lives, examines the multiple dimensions of education, and creates opportunities for students to critically engage while co-constructing knowledge. This approach complements the notion that humans are motivated to engage in their own process of becoming. Educators “listen to their students and build on their knowledge of experience to engage in contextualized, dynamic, and personalized educational approaches that further the goals of humanization and social transformation” (Salazar, 2013, p. 127).

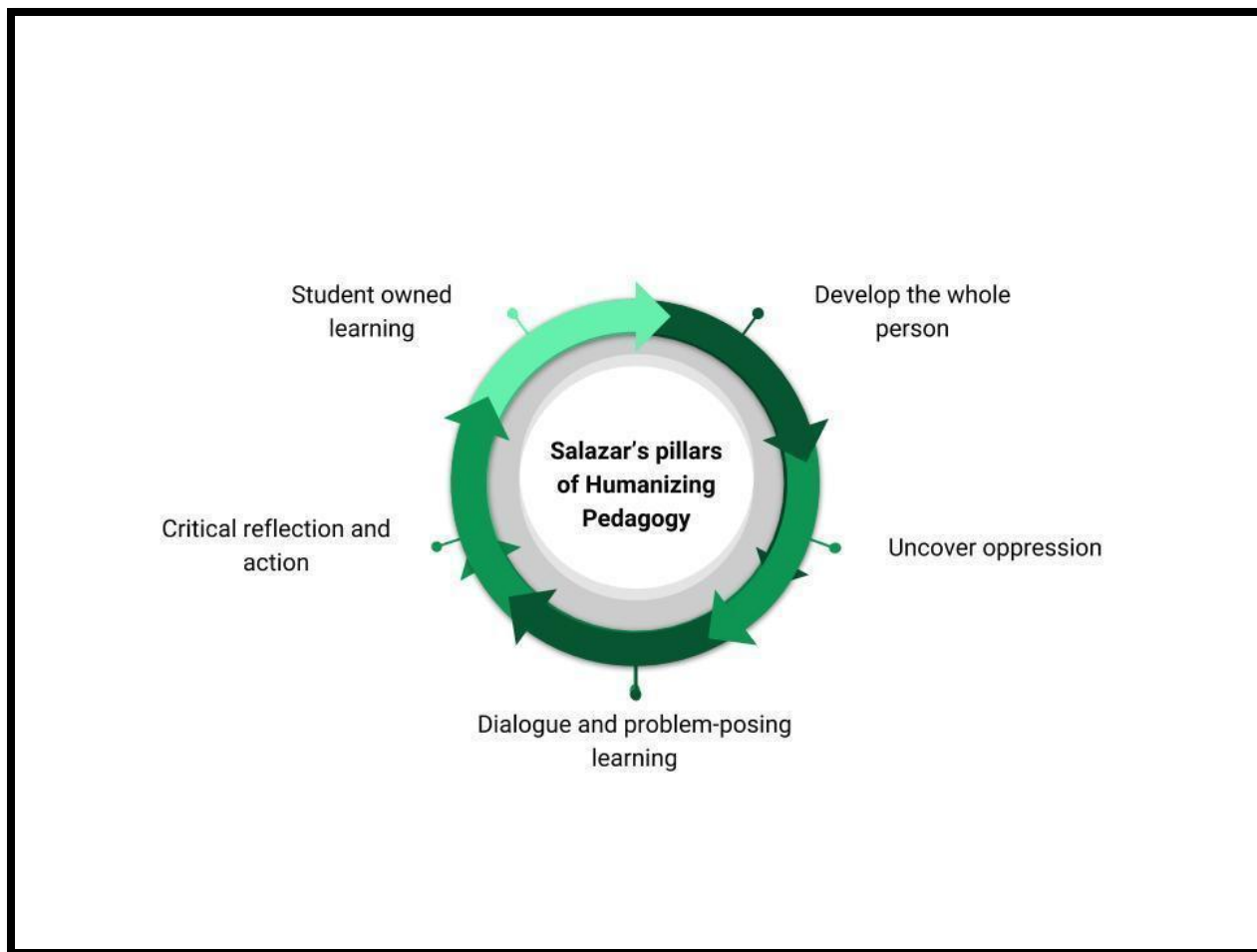


Figure 2: Salazar's five pillars in humanizing pedagogy

Salazar (2013) described five pillars in humanizing pedagogy theory in Freire's work (see *Figure 2*, p. 42). First, the work is designed to develop the whole person. It is crucial to understand education as more than just technical training but also the full development of the person. Second, Freire's work reminds teachers, also regarded as oppressors, to avoid taking the position of filling "empty vessels" (Freire, 1970, p. 57; i.e. student minds). Usually, the teacher determines the need and the student learns whatever the teacher has predetermined. This "banking concept" dehumanizes the learner (Freire, 1982, p. 5). Humanizing pedagogy instead

encourages the educator to constantly discover and rediscover paths that make it easier for the learner to see what is to be discovered.

A third pillar suggests developing critical consciousness and engaging students in transformative dialogue requiring both the student and teacher to become subjects in the learning. This creates reciprocity in teaching and learning. Everyone in the classroom achieves true understanding of all subjects through conversation, questioning, and sharing of one's interpretations. The educator enters dialogue with the student's situation and offers tools, so she can teach herself. Freire demonstrates that "authentic education is not "carried on by 'A' for the 'B' or 'A' about 'B', but rather by 'A' with 'B'" (Freire, 1982, p. 93). Leaders do not "go to the people to bring them a message of 'salvation,' but to come to know through dialogue with them both their objective situation and their awareness of that situation" (p. 95). The fourth pillar of human pedagogy requires critical reflection and action to transform existing structures that impede social change, global justice, and humanization. Fifth, Freire demands educators give ownership to the students to take into consideration anything that might limit or expand opportunities to humanize education.

Freire's (1970) *Humanizing Pedagogy* guided my conversations between women SLIFE and me, allowing opportunity to both discover and activate awareness of their experiences. If I limit our dialogue by my questions, oppression will be maintained. But, if critical analysis occurs between both of us during the interview, new thinking may emerge.

This offers a unique approach to research of SLIFE women. Using Freire's (1970) *Humanizing Pedagogy* encourages discussion regarding how to support the needs of SLIFE women in a participatory and organized way. The lens informing my research centers on the

conviction that the education cannot “present its own program but must search for this program dialogically with the people, in which the oppressed must participate” (Freire, 1970, p. 124).

Conclusion

Applying two theoretical frameworks in exploring the educational experiences and future opportunities of SLIFE women creates a possibility for new questions not yet asked or answered by the current literature. I hope to discover the answers to some of the questions emerging from my research, such as: What educational encounters did SLIFE women experience prior to coming to the United States? What specific experiences take place in the Minnesota education system for SLIFE women? What career opportunities currently exist for SLIFE women? How do they envision their future? How can Minnesota and the educational system prepare to meet the needs of future SLIFE women? These questions may provide the information to address these challenges in new and exciting ways. The answers to these questions may inform educational systems and programs to meet the needs of more immigrants coming to the United States and Minnesota.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research and narrative inquiry guided my exploration of how SLIFE women experience and make meaning of their interrupted educational experiences and future educational and career opportunities in Minnesota. The women described their lives before coming to Minnesota, the journey they took, how they experienced education once they arrived, and their hopes for the future. Many of the women were reluctant to share obstacles and disappointments they faced in Minnesota, so I added the observations of teachers working with SLIFE.

I adopted qualitative research because it makes meaning of the subjects' lives, providing perspectives from the subjects themselves (Creswell, 2013). I describe how narrative inquiry, an approach within the qualitative research tradition, allowed me to listen to the stories told by SLIFE women and their teachers.

Human beings have lived out and told stories about that living for as long as we could talk. And then we have talked about the stories we tell for almost as long. These lived and told stories and the talk about the stories are one of the ways that we fill our world with meaning and enlist one another's assistance in building lives and communities. What feels new is the emergence of narrative methodologies in the field of social science research (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 35).

First, I describe qualitative research, providing support for my selection of this method.

Qualitative research serves as an overarching framework to address my research question, and narrative inquiry focuses on the day-to-day experience of students and teachers using story. My description of methodology describes Institutional Review Board permission and processes, my recruitment of SLIFE women and their teachers, the collection and analysis of data, and addresses validity and reliability in this qualitative research. I explain how, in conducting my study, I protected participants, acknowledged my biases, and addressed ethical concerns.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is descriptive, within the natural environment, and regards the

process as most important rather than outcomes and predictions (Bogden & Biklen, 2007). A qualitative researcher considers how people make meaning of their lives; such as what assumptions do people make about their lives and what do they take for granted. This approach allows the researcher to see the world through the "perspective of those who are seldom listened to- the criminal, vagrant, the immigrant" (Bogden & Biklen, 2007, p. 10). My research provides an understanding of the lives of the SLIFE women through their own perspective.

Qualitative data are rich in description of people, places, and conversations, not easily handled by the statistical methods and questioning techniques of quantitative data. Instead the data focus on understanding behavior from the informant's own frame of reference and collecting this information through sustained contact with people in settings where the subjects spend their time.

Qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Qualitative researchers study this problem by using an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to the literature or a call for change. (Creswell, 2013, p. 44)

Researchers seek understanding within a more natural environment and directly with the participants. The researcher collects data, interviews participants, and analyzes data to interpret experiences. This requires the use of complex reasoning, including inductive and deductive skills throughout the process. All data collected must be viewed through multiple layers and perspectives. As the research evolves, the researcher must work flexibly allowing the participants to guide the work. As a result, the researcher explores and presents on the complexities of the topic.

The focus of my research question depends on building meaning from the essence of why, what, when, where, and how SLIFE women see their future (Berg, 2012; Creswell, 2013). I adopted narrative inquiry, an approach within qualitative research (Creswell, 2013), to introduce marginalized voices of women SLIFE immigrants and refugees and their teachers. This method used story as a vehicle for SLIFE women, and those who educate them, and allowed the women to take a more active role in the research process.

Narrative Inquiry

One component not found in the initial research belonged to the voices of the students themselves. Believing the best solutions come from the people themselves, hearing the perspectives of the students became crucial (Freire, 2000). Narrative inquiry provides a methodology to achieve Freire's (1970) vision of Humanizing Pedagogy. I felt compelled to tell the stories of those often silenced, marginalized, and forgotten. Narrative inquiry allowed me to authentically participate in understanding the cultures and experiences of SLIFE women.

Narrative inquiry emerged out of the Enlightenment era, along with the social sciences (Maynes et al., 2008). During that time, individuals began developing their own capacity to reason, think, and search for their own truth. Critics, like Foucault, believed ultimate control belonged to institutions, which created norms rather than subconscious individuals (as cited in Maynes et al., 2008). Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) explain that narrative inquiry begins as a "respect for ordinary lived experience ... [exploring] both the individuals' experience as well as the social, cultural, and institutional narratives within which individuals' experiences were constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted" (p. 42). I hoped to learn how forces outside of the women's experiences affected them. Certainly, conditions of poverty and various cultural norms impact each woman differently. Narrative inquiry provided an opportunity to introduce

marginalized voices and counter-narratives to dispute misleading generalizations or universal claims (Maynes et al., 2008).

The Power of Story

Spanbaeur (2000) described the power of story: “The only thing that keeps us from floating off with the wind is our stories. They give us a name and put us in a place, allow us to keep on touching” (p. 190). People live their lives in storied forms. The stories people tell demonstrate how they make sense of their lives. “Stories become the portal through which a person enters the world by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful” (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 4). A narrative can organize time and explore human experiences, and narrative inquiry offers insights into human thought from inside out, bridging the gap between individual experiences and the outside world. The narrative becomes an account of experience, not necessarily a factual account of what “really” happened (Josselson, 2011; Maynes et al., 2008).

The design of narrative inquiry facilitates a relationship between the participant and researcher (Lessard, Caine, & Clandinin, 2014). Researchers inquire and listen to the participants as they describe their experiences, collecting extensive information about them while creating a clear understanding of the context of their lives. Researchers pay attention to the content of the story and the structure, noting the unsaid and omissions. “In narrative research, a key theme has been to turn toward the relationship between the researcher and the researched in which both parties will learn and change in the encounter” (Creswell, 2013, p. 75). The researcher’s experience shapes the study – including who she is and how she responds to the stories of the participants.

The value of education is a constant theme found in immigration narratives; the hopes and dreams of the immigrant population relies on education to provide a gateway in which to adapt and succeed (Exposito, 2012). This allowed me to explore how SLIFE women experience education and its potential for elevating their circumstances. Limited research exists on SLIFE, including studies using the stories of SLIFE – their voices and experiences needed to be included in the search for educational solutions. Next, I focus on the value sharing SLIFE women's stories have on the educational system.

Educator Benefits

While educators can read the data sheets and view the statistics on SLIFE women, they can never fully know their experiences (Clark-Kasimu, 2015). However, Exposito (2012) believed teachers could have a better understanding of SLIFE women's needs if the teachers connected to them through their narratives. Once educators hear these women's stories, they may begin to understand the importance of relating to immigrant children and families on a personal level, and then to tailor instruction to the circumstances of a student's cultural, linguistic, and human experiences (Exposito, 2012). Narrative inquiry demystifies erroneous beliefs and opinions and allows the personal side of individual women – a voice so often missing – to be seen.

In Bigelow's (2010) research of Somali teens, story helped educators to develop a more clear understanding of the experiences of these teens and their racialized school and community environments. Learning about the thoughts and dreams of these immigrants gave educators a chance to "correct, complicate, and or contest people's misperceptions of them" (p. 5). As the educators provided Somali adolescents opportunities to see themselves influencing their local and global community, the students found meaning in learning English, persisting through

school, and envisioning their future. This belief affected their commitment to family and community activities (Bigelow, 2010), and this approach supports not only my research method but also hope for identifying more effective educational strategies.

In Malsbary's (2014) study, immigrant youths' goals for themselves seemed rarely spoken aloud, recognized or valued by educational leaders. Campano (2007) wrote, "Storytelling is one way in which students can begin to understand and perhaps gain a degree of control over past experiences that may not have been fully intelligible at the time of their occurrence" (p. 52).

The stories of marginalized people, not told in official documents, create a valuable oral history. Narrative research increasingly describes personal stories of disenfranchised and traumatized groups through new lenses. Shuman (2003) asked if the circulation of these stories helps in healing, changing status, or creating social change. If the only purpose it serves confirms the marginalized status rather than changing it, then it only further disenfranchises the already marginalized. "The stories these children tell of their experiences in their home countries or en route to the United States have an emotional impact on all who work with them. I don't know how many more stories I can take, wrote one teacher" (Zimmerman-Orozco, 2015, p. 50). Narrative inquiry within my research seeks to find balance in illuminating the voices of the SLIFE women, recognizing their voices may lead to societal change. The first step in conducting my study was to gain permission to proceed from the Institutional Review Board.

UST Institutional Review Board Permission and Guidelines

The purpose of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) is to review research that involves human subjects. Securing permission ensures research methods are lawful and ethical. I made two separate applications to the IRB board. The first group of study participants consisted of women who immigrated to the United States as teenagers. The IRB recognized these women as

vulnerable due to their high poverty and immigrant status. The women also limited in their English skills were two or more years academically lower than their peers. Many immigrants continued to face an uncertain legal status as the current United States government debated their future. The second group of study participants consisted of Minnesota teachers of SLIFE.

I followed all IRB policies with regards to conducting human subject research and ensuring the protection of the participants within the study. All IRB policies regarding human subject research, intended to protect the rights, dignity, and privacy of all participants, were followed. The first IRB application required general consent forms in four languages; English, Arabic, Spanish, and Somali. The consent was intended to explain the purpose and background of my research study. The consent form also informed the participant of the risks and included resources and phone numbers for support. Privacy and confidentiality statements ensured all records, transcripts, and recordings would not identify the participant, and I stored them in a secure manner. Each participant was informed of the options to request a translator and select the time and location of the interview. I notified the participant her consent was voluntary and if a signature was requested at her agreement. The IRB also included the interpreter confidentiality agreement, transcriber agreements, and interview questions.

The second group of participants, Minnesota teachers of SLIFE, required an additional IRB application. The teachers did not qualify as a vulnerable population. I followed all IRB policies with regards to conducting the research and ensuring the protection of the participants within the study. The general consent form included the purpose, background, risks and benefits of the study. Privacy and confidentiality statements ensured all records, transcripts, recordings, would not identify the participant and would remain secured. The participant selected the time

and date of the interview. The consent form was signed, voluntarily if the participant agreed to be interviewed.

Recruitment and Selection of Participants

After achieving IRB approval for the first application, I used connections made through previous research, to contact professionals working with immigrants and SLIFE. I identified participants currently in local school districts, adult newcomer education programs, local universities, and immigrant organizations such as; International Institute of Minnesota, Minneapolis Community Education, and Arrive Ministries. I sent an email (Appendix A) informing the professionals of my study, requesting potential participants. It was through one of these professional contacts, a leader at Washington High School, that I gained access to SLIFE women.

The professional contact provided several names of women meeting the criteria used by the State of Minnesota identifying SLIFE women upon their arrival to the United States; Students 14 and over and more than two years behind their age level peers academically. Currently, the SLIFE women participants are between the ages of 18-21, and reside in Minnesota. All women had a current legal immigration status. First, the Washington High School employee contacted each potential participant and informed her of the research project. Once the list was reviewed, contact information and names were shared with me. Next, I met with ten potential participants at the Washington leader's arrangement, described my study in detail, explained the privacy and confidentiality agreement, and provided procedural details and a copy of the consent form in the preferred language. Recruitment was difficult due to the political climate and legal status. Although all potential participants met legal status criteria, many were concerned about long term immigration policy and whether their status might change.

If the participant agreed to proceed and met the criteria of SLIFE, she selected a date, time, and location of the interview. Participants were invited to have an interpreter for the interview if desired, one of their choice or one I would provide. Two women chose to have an interpreter.

After a thorough explanation and review of information, I asked the participant to sign the consent forms (Appendices B, C, D) and we began the interview. Interview questions were provided to each woman (Appendices E, F, G). Eight women at Washington High School shared their stories of immigration. At the time of the interview participants ranged between 18 and 20 years of age. Four of the women came as refugees from East Africa and the other four women travelled from Latin America (see Table 1, p. 53). All of these participants attended some form of schooling, although their experiences and duration in school were different. As a result of their limited and often interrupted education, they qualified as SLIFE. Each of the participants arrived at the age of 14 or older. One woman arrived within the last year, one had been in Minnesota for five years, and the rest called Minnesota home for two to four years.

Table 1:
Students with limited or interrupted education (SLIFE) participants (pseudonym)

Name	Country of Origin	Years in US	Ethnicity
Esmeralda	Guatemala	2	Latina
Angelina	Mexico	3	Latina
Freira	Ecuador	3	Latina
Guadalupe	El Salvador	1	Latina
Hodan	Somalia/Ethiopian Refugee Camp	4	East African
Beydan	Djibouti, Refugee Camp	5	East African
Dhudi	Somalia/Ethiopian Refugee Camp	2	East African
Cawo	Ethiopia	3	East African

As each woman shared her story, I recognized she was reluctant to say anything negative regarding her life or educational experiences in the United States. Many of the woman claimed, “Everything was so good!” or “Education was opportunity,” or they planned to “be a doctor” after high school. Feeling frustrated, I asked adults experienced with the immigrant culture why my participants might be reluctant to provide realistic or negative details. These knowledgeable adults shared how newly arrived immigrants of certain cultures often tell Americans what they think Americans want to hear. SLIFE teachers recognized many of their immigrant students remained ignorant of their current academic realities that could explain their unrealistic future plans. I also recognized the short time I spent with each woman was not enough to develop trust where the participant felt safe enough to share her most private stories. Not feeling I had enough information to make recommendations, I decided to interview teachers who work with SLIFE. The teachers shared the educational experiences they observed students facing as well as their own challenges teaching SLIFE.

Washington’s administration shared 12 names of teachers that work with SLIFE. I contacted all 12 of the teachers by email (Appendix H). The eight teachers who responded set up a date, time, and place to conduct the interviews and I attached the interview outline and consent form. Each teacher signed the consent form (Appendix I) and were given an outline of the questions (Appendix J) before beginning the interview.

Eight teachers from Washington High School were interviewed and described their experiences working with SLIFE. Four of the teachers were assigned to teach language acquisition to English Language Learners (ELL). Two of these teachers have worked with ELL students for 10 years and the other two only four years. All the ELL teachers were familiar with

the term SLIFE, although only the more experienced teachers could readily identify SLIFE at Washington High School.

Four other teachers were interviewed (see Table 2, p. 55). Two of these teachers taught core subjects (math, history) to ELL students in a sheltered class, a co-taught class, and a mainstream class that included ELL students. The final two teachers provided elective courses in which many newcomers to Washington High School were registered. One taught music for over 17 years, and included ELL students. Another teacher has also taught for 10 years, teaching technology. Three of the four mainstream teachers never heard of the term SLIFE nor were they familiar with the acronym. The math teacher had some experience working with SLIFE. All of the teachers identified as white and two were male.

Table 2:
SLIFE teacher participants (pseudonym)

Name	Course	Years Teaching	Ethnicity
Ms. Scott	Math	12	White
Ms. Klein	ELL	10	White
Ms. Carlson	ELL	10	White
Ms. Miller	ELL	5	White
Ms. Smith	Technology	4	White
Mr. Matthews	History	2	White
Ms. Thompson	Music	17	White
Mr. Peterson	ELL	4	White

Data Collection

During an active interview, the researcher cultivates two key aims: (1) gathering information about the research topic, and (2) extracting a narrative interpretation of this

knowledge (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). I adopted the active interview because the researcher gathers information in a more comprehensive, storytelling manner. During conventional interviews, the passive subject engages in sharing information. Active interviews, however, equip the “subject with material and methods to tap into the subject’s interpretive ideas” (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 17). Active interviewing provides an environment allowing interpretation of complex issues through a conversation. The role of the interviewer is to activate, stimulate, and cultivate information that already exists. The interviewer assists in bringing in considerations, such as connections, interpretations, and ideas.

Active interviewers believe in the competence of the subject. The voices of a child, the elderly, or the uneducated are ignored implying there is little value to their stories. Mayhem (1968) a journalist from London, explained the value of such voices this way:

It surely may be considered curious as being the first attempt to publish a history of a people, from the lips of the people themselves – giving a literal description of their labour, their earnings, their trials, and their sufferings, in their own “unvarnished” language: and to portray the condition of their homes and their families by personal observation of the places, and direct communication with the individuals. (p. iii)

The information gained from the SLIFE women gives value to their voices while recognizing the complexities of their stories. Before the interview process began, I read the consent form to the study participants. Two SLIFE participants chose to have a translator. I reminded participants of all potential risks prior to signing any consent. I asked participants if they had any questions or concerns, and, when the participants agreed to be interviewed, I asked them to sign the form. I provided an outline of the interview (Appendices E, F, G) to allow participants to follow the interview as well as to provide structure and consistency to data collection.

At the beginning of the interview I asked the participant questions about themselves and

their family to help the women feel comfortable sharing information with me. I then asked the SLIFE participants to “Describe your life before you came to the United States.” After the women described life in detail, I asked the women to discuss the time they learned they would come to the United States and describe their journey. Next, the conversation shifted to life in the United States. I asked the participants about their experience going to school in Minnesota. I asked them to explain what it was like as they attended school, their successes, and challenges. Finally, each woman discussed her plans and hopes for the future. I asked the participants to give advice to other women coming to the United States or the teachers of these students. At the end of the interview, I asked each woman where she considered home. As the data were collected, ongoing analysis occurred so both the research procedures and questions adjusted in response to the participants’ sharing (Bruce, Beuthin, Shields, Molzahn, & Schick-Makaroff, 2016).

I revised my IRB application and received approval to interview teachers of SLIFE women. This revision was necessary because SLIFE women did not provide enough detailed information due to reluctance, fear, and lack of understanding. At the beginning of these interviews, I followed the same consent process and after teachers signed the confidentiality agreement (Appendix I). I asked teachers several questions (Appendix J) about their current role, background, and knowledge of SLIFE. This enabled me to understand the teacher’s knowledge and perspective and create a comfortable environment for conducting the interview. I asked teachers to describe their observations of SLIFE’s educational experiences. This included courses, challenges, their own strategies to meet the needs of these students, and barriers to student success. Next, I asked teachers to tell the story of one or two specific SLIFE they remembered and their personal experience with this student in school and beyond. Finally, I

asked teachers to talk about what worked for them and what they would like to see implemented for themselves as teachers and for the SLIFE.

Interviews lasted 40 minutes to one hour and twenty minutes. Throughout the interview process, it was crucial for me to recognize the role of the respondent such as a woman, sister, daughter, mother or teacher, learner, veteran, or novice. This lens impacted the information obtained and often shifted throughout the interview. I activated different aspects of this knowledge during the interview. Responses were more complex because the SLIFE women were able to tell their story through a variety of viewpoints.

I used an audio recording device to record each interview and sent the first three interviews to be transcribed. A confidentiality agreement was established prior to sending any audio recordings to the transcriber (Appendix K). I personally transcribed five interviews into written transcripts. The remaining interviews were uploaded and sent to Rev.com for transcription. The confidentiality agreement was also completed prior to the completion of the Rev transcriptions. I downloaded all audio recordings to my password - protected laptop. I did not use participants' names during the interviews. I deleted any personal identification and added pseudonyms to the interview transcripts to maintain their privacy and protect their identity. I also included using "member check" procedures during the study, viewing the participants as an important collaborator in the research. I shared the transcript with each teacher, gaining approval that the content was accurate. The transcripts of the SLIFE interviews were not shared with the SLIFE participants because the SLIFE women could not read the text. Transcripts will be destroyed at the completion of my dissertation.

Data Analysis

Upon completion of the interviews, I sent the audio recordings to a transcriber, Rev.com, or I personally transcribed the interviews. I saved the voice-recorded interviews to a separate removable hard drive and deleted the file from the recorder. I kept the removable hard drive in a locked cabinet when not in use.

I played the recorder multiple times and listened to the participants' responses after each interview. After transcribing the audiotapes, I printed one copy and added observer comments. Next, I uploaded each transcript to the coding software Dedoose.com. I read through each transcript two more times in the software to familiarize myself with the overarching context before identifying themes. Using the coding software Dedoose.com, I began to reread the transcripts, enter codes, and eventually themes began to emerge. I referred to my field notes and clarified any additional pieces of information (Berg, 2012).

Josselson (2011) described the following steps in narrative inquiry analysis: (1) read each interview, and look for general themes and global ideas, (2) reread each interview multiple times to identify different perspectives within each interview and how they develop, (3) look for different themes and patterns between the interviews that relate to the research question, and (4) use theories to interpret findings and bring forth something new.

First, I identified major themes, coding all the data into large categories. Once these themes had been established, I considered sub-themes within each category. I continued to subdivide each newly created subgroup, looking for their relationship to each other (Creswell, 2013). "Analysis aims to discover the themes that unify the story and the unique voices that carry, comment on, and disrupt the main themes" (Josselson, 2011, p. 226). According to Creswell (2013), active collaboration with the participant is necessary as the researcher begins to

“restory” or retell their account (p.76). I used analysis to piece together information, making the invisible noticeable, choosing what was important and less significant, while linking together unrelated facts.

Using a qualitative approach through narrative inquiry provided data rich in description of people, places, and conversations from the perspectives of the subjects. Active interviewing techniques elicited multiple layers of each participant’s story. The focus of my research question depended on building meaning from the essence of why, what, when, where, and how SLIFE women and their teachers viewed their experiences and future.

I first identified three themes found in the data: background, obstacles, and opportunities. The interviews started with the background stories of each woman. The questions created an opportunity to understand the trauma each woman experienced, creating empathy for their circumstances. Next, I coded the interviews from the teachers, incorporating the knowledge the teachers possessed regarding similar immigrant students. I found three main causes of trauma from the students and teachers; poverty, separation from loved ones, and violence witnessed or experienced. These traumas are the scars the women carried to the United States. Next, I grouped the journeys each woman took either across the Rio Grande and the southern United States border or from an East African refugee camp.

The next theme arising from my data consisted of the teaching and learning realities for SLIFE women and their teachers. First, I coded data in this category by the obstacles the SLIFE women faced when they arrived in the United States education system; their educational background, cultural and gender differences, and their future goals.

Next, I listed the ways teachers and the educational system were prepared, or unprepared, to meet the needs of SLIFE women. I examined the obstacles teachers and SLIFE experience as

it related to education and I categorized the obstacles into several sub categories; academic realities, cultural influences, and systemic expectations. I also created sub-categories for academic realities, cultural influences, and expectations.

Finally, the third theme arose when I examined the women's and teachers' suggestions for strategies and systems which might give SLIFE women hope. All participants, SLIFE women and teachers, gave suggestions regarding strategies they believed would work for SLIFE. The participants also had an opportunity to imagine a structure that might make the United States educational system easier to navigate and succeed. Once I identified, organized and summarized these major themes, I shared the findings with the teachers as another form of member checks. Next, I analyzed the data using two theories to interpret my data. I adopted Kim's (2001) cross -cultural theory of adaptation, focusing on the process of cross-cultural adaptation. Kim's theory included variables that impact the ease with which an immigrant adapts to her new culture. Using this theory, I considered how SLIFE women adapt to their new culture. I adapted Freire's (2000) humanizing pedagogy to explain how to include the oppressed in their own education in order for them to pursue their right to be fully human.

Reliability and Validity

Thyer (2010) described reliability as the degree to which different researchers might form similar results with the same research. Validity relates to the truthfulness or credibility of the study's findings and whether the research approach measures what it is intended to measure. I focused on purposeful sampling and peer debriefing to ensure the outcome of my research was reliable and valid. I used purposeful sampling by intentionally selecting eight SLIFE women and eight teachers of SLIFE to interview. Thyer (2010) supports this method by stating, "If a

researcher can reproduce the finding in a new context or in another case, the hypothesis gains more credibility” (p. 365).

Researcher Preparation and Bias

Working with students and English language learners throughout my 20-year career provides me first-hand experience as a teacher and district leader. As an educator for ELL students, I struggled to find ways to meet the variety of my students’ needs. Often unequipped and lacking knowledge of ELL methods, I independently researched best practices through workshops, books, and mentors. During my district work with English learning Pre-K through high school students, I observed the challenges and inefficiencies of the current educational system.

In the most recent years of my career, my work in a suburban district and urban high school highlighted the specific student group, SLIFE. Working with teachers, students, and families, I quickly realized a gap in resources, structures, and information to meet the needs of SLIFE. The relationships I have developed with staff, students and families provided glimpses into the struggles, successes, and hopes for SLIFE. These experiences motivated me to seek new ideas and methods of educating our SLIFE rather than continuing current structures. Believing in the power of educating women, I especially felt a connection with the women students. Many of these women had to navigate a culture very different from their own, creating a conflict between family expectations and the new culture. My understanding of this conflict enabled me to seek out relevant information from the women as they were interviewed.

Most of my understandings of cultural norms come from my White, middle-class, United States upbringing. All my ancestors emigrated from Europe between 1700-1900, and I spent most of my life in the Midwestern United States. My personal experience in adapting to a

culture other than my own is limited to a couple months as a student in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Europe. I travelled with leaders who managed all living necessities. I relied on the English language to communicate in each location. As a temporary guest, my hosts treated me hospitably. I do not have personal knowledge of immigration or extended integration in a new culture.

Much of my experience presents evidence of insufficient educational systems for SLIFE. Most SLIFE I work with face incredible odds to fulfill their future aspirations with limited success, especially women students. Though few interventions exist, it is possible to develop successful structures to help students succeed. The teachers shared some of the ways they understood and supported SLIFE women.

Ethical Considerations

The SLIFE participants took risks by sharing their stories. Many revealed frightening and painful memories and most expressed uncertainty of their future. I created a safe environment by smiling and warmly engaging in each person's story. I was quick to remind a participant she did not need to share anything that made her uncomfortable. I also provided each SLIFE woman with support services' contact information. I enthusiastically encouraged each woman in her future endeavors. Students who struggled with the English language were provided interpreters, or I carefully rephrased questions while exhibiting patience as each woman tried to accurately describe her thoughts.

The teachers also took risks in sharing their personal stories and struggles in the classroom. I eagerly listened with empathy as classroom teachers described strategies that have worked and failing strategies. I smiled and actively encouraged each teacher in their hard work at meeting each student's needs.

I maintained confidentiality of all participants at all times. I was the only person to know anyone's identity. Participation was voluntary, and I did not provide compensation of any kind. I provided two copies of each consent form to each interviewee; I signed both and the participant signed both so that we each have a copy for our files. This form included a synopsis of the study, explanation of how the data would be used, and a statement regarding confidentiality. I also assigned a pseudonym and kept each person's identity confidential. I protected all transcripts and documentation in a locked cabinet for the duration of the study and destroyed them after my committee accepted my dissertation.

Summary

In this chapter, I described the methodology used in this narrative study. I identified the characteristics defining a qualitative and narrative study. I described the process used for an IRB approval, selecting and recruiting participants, collecting data, analyzing data, identifying researcher bias, and identifying strategies used to ensure reliability and validity and ethical treatments of participants. Chapter 4 includes stories of SLIFE' experiences in their native country and journeys to the United States. Chapter 5 describes SLIFE's educational experiences in their home country and their entry into the United States education system. It also explains SLIFE women's plans for their future. Teachers also share their background and experiences working with SLIFE. Chapter 6 describes the recommendations from the SLIFE women and teachers to make their educational experiences more productive. I begin with the experiences of SLIFE women as they leave their native homes to escape poverty and violence.

CHAPTER FOUR: COMING TO AMERICA

I interviewed SLIFE women about their experiences living in their native country as well as the circumstances causing their departure and journey to the United States. However, because SLIFE women wished to focus more on the present than their past experiences, and often avoided stories of hardships experienced in their home countries and on their journeys, I also interviewed eight SLIFE teachers. These teachers had formed relationships with SLIFE, listened to their stories, and supplied important details to help me triangulate the data and tell a more complete story about the general experiences of SLIFE women. Because background and educational experiences affect students' ability to learn and progress in new educational settings, teachers need to appreciate the challenges faced by SLIFE women and support them as students and human beings.

This chapter describes the experiences of eight SLIFE women, including the circumstances affecting them prior to coming to America, and the effects of their type of entry into the United States. I describe the educational background, difficulties associated with learning a new culture and language, and how prior education and experiences affected students' ability to earn a high school diploma and establish post-secondary career goals in Chapter five. The final data chapter describes the teachers' and students' recommendations for supporting the next group of SLIFE, as well as my recommendations based on my collected data.

In this chapter the SLIFE women's stories lift the veil of trauma they experienced and its effects. Their stories reveal several different types of trauma the women experienced prior to entering the United States. The sources of trauma included poverty, family separation, and violence.

Trauma

All participants experienced hardship and trauma in their country of origin leading to their departure for the United States. The degree of trauma these women faced, as well as their pride in their home country, made the participants reluctant to share all the details of their stories. All eight women hesitated when referring to negative experiences. However, interviews with teachers helped me fill in some details these women left out. While living in their native countries, SLIFE women faced poverty, significant food insecurity, and harsh living environments before seeking refuge in the United States.

Poverty

According to Population Below Poverty (2017), those refugees coming from Latin America face poverty. Currently, 59% of Guatemala's population lives below the poverty line. Mexico and El Salvador poverty rates are at 46% and 35% respectively (Index Mundi, 2017). United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) described increasing numbers of individuals fleeing gang violence in Central America, specifically El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico, have journeyed to the United States in search of protection. This proved true of the participants in my study. Three of the four Latina women interviewed came from one of the Central American countries, and the fourth travelled to the United States from Ecuador. All four women from the Americas described difficult living conditions and food insecurity in their native country.

Guadalupe grew up in San Salvador, El Salvador with her mother, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Her mother and grandfather both worked at a local shop. She happily recalled the beauty of El Salvador:

The beach, parks, and beautiful places [to] eat and go[ing] biking. [It] was so fun to do it. And we celebrate to God. [We had time for] vacations and [going] to the beach and [to] celebrate. So, [life] was so good.

Guadalupe's fondness of her home country was evident as she recalled life in El Salvador surrounded with family and friends living a fulfilled life.

A few years later, her mother and grandfather lost their jobs. "It was so, so, so, so hard because I couldn't still [keep] going to high school." They did not have any money. "It was a very hard situation. Because in my house we don't have money for food, money for many things you know we need. No... Nobody... [had] money."

Guadalupe's family ate three times a day before losing their income. When they did not have any money, Guadalupe said they ate "like two [meals a day]." She said her "mother always [provided for us], I don't know how she did [it]." One way to manage the lack of food involved telling Guadalupe to ignore her hunger. Her mother told her, "Don't feel hungry now, you know?" The story reveals how poverty robbed Guadalupe of a safe and secure life due to family unemployment and hard times. The women from Central and South America lived in poverty, lacking resources for many of their basic needs, because of the economic and social disruption in their country. Like the Latina women, the East African women also lived in poverty. As refugees, the women left their native country to live in camps established because of war. To appreciate the reality of these circumstances, I identified several factors contributing to hunger, including delays in promised food deliveries and inadequate nutrition.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR: Food Shortages Affecting Refugees, 2000) explained the reasons for chronic malnutrition in the camps. People suffer due to the lack of sufficient food because most refugees depend entirely on humanitarian aid. Although the UNHCR recommends each refugee receive more than 2,100 calories per day,

often camps fall short of this standard. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees also estimates more than half of the refugee camps in the world are unable to provide the recommended daily water minimum of 20 liters of water per person per day (UNHCR: Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, 2016).

All four East African refugees, Beydan, Hodan, Dhudi, and Cawo, described the harsh living conditions and the methods they used to survive while living in the refugee camps. Beydan's parents left Somalia after her mother's parents were killed in the war. Beydan remembers her refugee house made of "woods." She identified her home in an Internet image; small, round, and built of branches and a thatch roof. "We sleep together.... the living room is outside...sometimes we sleep outside." Beydan also vividly remembered the refugee camp had a lot of people. East African refugee camps house between 200,000 to half a million people (UNHCR, 2015). Overcrowding and close living quarters made refugee camps unsanitary and unsafe. Cawo also acknowledged they did not have a lot of necessities in the camp.

Hodan's mother cleaned the "kindergarten school" so her family could have food. Food assistance was unreliable, minimal, and families often looked for ways to make extra money to supplement their rations. When asked if she was hungry, Hodan hesitated, "So we never hungry...sometimes, yeah, maybe."

As with many women describing their native country, Hodan's attachment to her homeland made her reluctant to paint a negative picture. As the women described living situations where food was scarce and living conditions difficult, all of them smiled as they recalled their fondness for what was once home.

Dhudi lived in the refugee camp for 13 years where her mother, like Hodan's, washed clothes so they could eat. She described the refugee camp as having "a lot of people. Every day

it was raining.” During the rainy season, this meant muddy streets, floors, and overflowing sewage. She also described the home her mother made with other women once they arrived in Ethiopia. It was common for women to leave their war-torn country and seek refuge in the camps with their children. Many women worked together to support one another during the difficult transition. Dhudi remembers,

They built a house...wood and salt. Sand. Dirt.... We have two rooms like we eat in and bedroom. We cook outside. And you eat outside or you eat in the living room. And then we have chickens. We have three. Just one chicken in the living room and two in the bedroom.

Refugees lived and stored all their belongings on small, temporary plots of land in the camp. Livestock of those lucky enough to have them were kept in the family’s shelter to protect them from theft or the elements.

Teachers also described stories they heard from their students about refugee camp life. Peterson recalled the attitude of many of his students. “‘There’s nothing to do here but just hang out,’ and ‘we can’t even go buy food if we want to.’” Many of Peterson’s students acknowledged food came in a truck, and if the truck did not come, there was no food and the refugees went hungry. The refugees sometimes spent the entire day waiting around for the truck and left without food. This reality contributed to their low morale and malnutrition.

All four African refugees experienced the harsh reality of living in refugee camps: scarce food, crowded conditions, people and livestock squeezed into small homes, and few opportunities to make extra money to feed their families. All eight women’s stories demonstrate basic needs were unreliable, and oftentimes nonexistent, creating ongoing trauma.

Separation

A second cause of trauma involved the separation from loved ones. In many cases, separation from parents can cause irreparable harm both mentally and physically for children.

All eight women interviewed experienced separation from family members. In East Africa, some relatives stayed behind to protect their property or fight in the war. Others feared for their safety in the refugee camps, believing staying in their homeland was safer. Many refugees fleeing war often lost family members who stayed behind and became war casualties. The African women described the separation they experienced.

Beydan's family fled Somalia after relatives were killed in war. Hodan and Dhudi left their homelands for the refugee camps, leaving their fathers and other relatives behind. Cawo's family lived together in the camp, but when she was just five years old, her father left Ethiopia and came to the United States on a visa in search of opportunities to support his family. When she was ten, her mom also left for the United States to join her father. Cawo became emotional as she recalled staying behind in Harar, Ethiopia with her brother and her grandmother. "I was crying every single day. And then, like, if one week I was, like, cry every single day until my grandma say don't worry. I am here." Like Cawo, many children were raised by other family members. She remembers eventually her family told her to forget her sadness. "I was like, stop crying and then after months and years and I forget." Cawo, Beydan, Dhudi, and Hodan were forced to live in impoverished conditions without their father and other relatives. This added to their hardship.

All four women in Central and South America also experienced the plight of family separation. Three women, Esmeralda, Frieria, and Guadalupe described these experiences. Esmeralda grew up in a rural village in Guatemala with her grandmother, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Like children in Africa, Latina relatives care for children when the parents go in search of opportunities in the United States. Esmeralda's father left for the United States when her mother was pregnant with her. Her mother joined her father in the United States when

Esmeralda was nine months old. When she was six years old, her parents returned to Guatemala with new siblings, two brothers and a sister. Esmeralda loved her new siblings and living as a family. After a few months, the parents ran out of money and returned to Minnesota to work. They left the children with a “random woman who came to watch us. She was looking for work and she came to look after us.” After a few years, the parents returned for the boys, but left Esmeralda and her sister in Guatemala. “I was really sad to not be with my brothers, because I liked my brothers, but I didn’t really feel sad about my parents, because I didn’t really know them.” Esmeralda’s story illustrates the confusion and instability many children experience when their parents leave home in search of economic opportunities in the United States.

Friera met her mom for the first time at the Minnesota airport. Friera’s mother left to join her father and find work in the United States when Friera was an infant. They wanted to provide money for the Ecuadorian family’s basic needs. Her grandmother cared for Friera and her older sister. Friera’s father visited once when she was young. Friera recalled a happy life in Ecuador. She smiled as she recalled the beauty of her country. She listened to music, went to the park, and ate guinea pig with fries. When her grandmother passed away, 16-year-old Fiera decided to travel to the United States alone to meet her mother. Like Friera, many immigrant children from Central and South America, flee to the United States to live with their parents of whom they have little memory. Reunited with their families in the United States, Friera and Esmeralda felt living with their parents was like living with strangers. Even for those women reunited with their parent(s) in the United States, they affectionately remembered those they left behind who had nurtured and loved them for many years.

Some refugees face separation once they leave their home country and cross the southern United States border. Angelina, her mother and sister fled Mexico, leaving their family behind.

Separation occurred when Guadalupe's mother found a way for her to go to the United States to live with an aunt in Minnesota. Her mother stayed behind to care for her ailing parents. The family believed this decision would be a great opportunity for Guadalupe and their only hope to provide financial support for the family. Esmeralda recalled, "Everybody thinks when people come this country is like you're gonna have enough money. You're gonna have a great life." Many living in Central and South America believe if you live in the United States you will be rich and happy, as the media portrays. Like most immigrants, once they arrived they quickly realized this is not necessarily true. Guadalupe's story illustrated the desperate hope many have when deciding to leave family. The experience of separation from their parents or other family members continued to add to each woman's trauma. Poverty and loss of family adversely affected participants, however, their experience of violence made the trauma even more unbearable.

Violence

Along with poverty and separation, many women described violence they observed or experienced. The violence took the lives of parents and family members of some of the women in the Americas and Eastern Africa. Most women were reluctant to share details of these experiences. The teachers were able to fill in some details of the violent conditions most of the women faced. Three women from the Americas, Esmeralda, Guadalupe, and Angelina shared pieces of their stories.

Esmeralda's life in El Salvador felt unsafe and unstable. When her parents returned to the United States with her brothers, she described living with relatives and her sister. Not long after her parents left, her sister died. She lived with her grandmother, but the aunts and uncles who lived there too would beat her. She began to go into the streets with her friends, skipping school

and walking around. She described this as the only time she felt happy. Her father learned she was on the streets, got angry and ordered her to live with her maternal grandmother in the city. This made Esmeralda angry and she began drinking and hanging out in the streets with men. Her father ordered her to go back to village with her paternal family. The family again mistreated her, calling her a thief, threatening her, isolating her, and refusing to feed her. “I didn’t have the desire to live anymore. I felt so bad. I had to have an exit. The only way was to come to the United States.” Esmeralda’s life of beatings and isolation is one example of the desperation some immigrants face causing them to begin the dangerous journey north.

Carlson explained that students in Central America tried to escape gangs and violence. She describes the circumstances of many of her students before they arrive in the United States. “El Salvador is the leading murder capital of the world right now. They’re escaping gangs. They’re escaping drugs. They’re escaping violence and brutality.” To keep the children and young women safe, families hide them from gang members and drug lords. Carlson knew some of the young women she taught “had been in hiding for a couple of years, missing a few years of education because their parents didn’t want them out in public.”

Guadalupe’s story confirms the many stories Carlson has heard. She explains that if you are poor like I was, [you] live in places [where there] are gangs. [One] gang and then two gangs [they begin to] fight for places... They say, “This is my place, and this is my place, this is my” ...so they kill people. And if you [are on] the bus, somebody can come [on the bus] and say, “Give me your money.” [If] you don’t want to give [them] your money, they kill you. In the street people say, “Give your money, I’m gonna kill you!” Or [if] you go [on] the bus people just take your money when you [don’t notice]. So, it wasn’t safe.

Guadalupe and her family tried to stay hidden from the violence around them. They lived in fear, rarely venturing into public places. She also remembers standing at the door with her mom and being excited about fireworks. But it was not fireworks. Her mom pushed her inside the house when some men started shooting. Guadalupe’s mother realized her daughter’s life was at

risk as the violence worsened. Leaving for the northern borders was the only hope for Guadalupe to finally be safe.

Angelina lived in a Mexican border town. She had to drop out of school for two years because her family had a “situation” and it was not safe for her to go to school. Angelina’s community was known for a number of drug lords. She hesitated to share details of her story and referred vaguely to a “situation.” She reluctantly mentioned many of her community members had weapons and guards. Three years ago, Angelina’s father was executed in front of her, her mother, and sister, and quickly they decided to escape to a safer place. Witnessing her father’s murder caused intense trauma for Angelina. One of the more experienced ESL teachers, Carlson, described students like Angelina. “There are not as many students from Mexico as you might think, but the majority of the students that I’ve gotten from Mexico are [due to] gangs and drug lords. The students are just escaping the issues they have there.” Observing and experiencing violence still deeply affects each one of the women from the Americas today.

Violence is not limited to the immigrants crossing the southern border. Violence was part of life for the East African women. Dhudi, Hodan, and Cawo discussed the violence their family endured before arriving in the refugee camps. Al Shabaab in Somalia murdered Dhudi’s three “aunties,” causing her mother to flee Somalia with her family and go to a refugee camp. Her father stayed in Somalia to protect the home and a few months later the children learned Al Shabaab also killed their father.

Another African woman, Hodan, lived in a wealthier section of Somalia. At the age of eight she and her family left because of the war in Somalia, but her father, who stayed behind to protect their property in Somalia, later died, a casualty of the war. The violence and death Dhudi and Hodan experienced at young ages propelled their mothers to seek safety for their families in

refugee camps.

Violence remained a threat within Cawo's country. Many accused the Ethiopian government of abdicating its responsibility to protect its citizens. Villages were raided, and men, women, and children were randomly killed. Cawo described the danger of living in Ethiopia. "They have fighting. They have, you know the, the President and they kill people.... He kind of mean. He don't like the students, he don't like nobody. He just like killing the students or something like that." Cawo fearfully described her country's instability.

All the African women acknowledged living in a refugee camp was not easy. Matthews recalled difficult stories her refugee students shared over the years. She remembered one student with mental impairments. Matthews noted, she was too shy to share what had happened to her in the refugee camp. "Her brother filled in the gaps. She was hit. There was violence and stuff like that." All four African women lived in the camps long enough to experience or observe the violence, too traumatized to share the details.

Seven of the eight women explicitly shared ways violence impacted their lives before leaving for the United States. Many immigrants leave their homeland in search of safety, but they carry with them the observed or personal experiences of violence from their home country.

All eight women survived poverty, familial separation, and endured or witnessed violence. These traumas influenced their decisions to leave their home country and search for safety and security in the United States. Hunger and impoverished conditions jeopardized the women's health. Families were divided. Dhudi, Hodan, and Angelina's experience with violence took the lives of their fathers, leaving their families without a patriarch to protect them. Violence at the hands of family members and instability and war within their community and country left these women desperate to find safety. Each is left with scars of trauma. These scars

propelled all eight women to seek out a new home.

The journeys each woman took to find a new home in the United States expanded her trauma because of the dangerous travel conditions and the confusion felt when confronting new cultures. Next, I describe the women's steps in coming to the United States.

The Journey

All eight women described trauma from poverty, separation, and violence that existed prior to leaving their home country. The women experienced difficult living conditions and left their homes because their future required it. Esmeralda summarized this idea: "They come here for a reason. There is [a] problem. [They] didn't just come because [they] wanted to [come to the United States]." In the next section, I describe how trauma continued for each woman as she travelled to her new home, the United States. The women from Latin America told harrowing stories about their journeys across the border on foot. The women from East Africa recalled their confusion upon entering a new continent and a new world in the United States. First, I describe the Latinas' crossing into the United States, and then compare this with the East African participants' experiences at entry to the United States.

Crossings

The Latina women share similar stories, each traveled with a coyote or a smuggler from Latin America. Their goal involved seeking asylum. Hiring for a coyote is risky, especially for vulnerable young women. Journeys were dangerous and traumatic for most. Many of Carlson's Latina students described "being built inside of walls of vans" so the vans can sneak over the border. Other students explained how they came in semis and refrigerated trucks. Many men, women, and children walked, took trains, or hopped on trains illegally.

Carlson also heard “lots of rape stories from the young women. I know one young woman who was sold on her way up here.” All four young women were reluctant to share many details of their travels to avoid reliving the traumatic journey. Guadalupe, Frieria, and Esmeralda descriptively recounted perhaps one of the most terrifying parts of the journey, crossing the United States border.

Angelina left her Mexican town after her father’s execution. She walked three days to the United States/Mexican border with her mom and sister. Coyotes escorted them to the border. “I don’t like to remember it. I feel sad because I don’t stay in my country anymore.” The traumatic reason for Angelina’s departure and terrifying journey to safety was too difficult to recount in detail.

Guadalupe and her mother saved money to pay for Guadalupe’s journey to the United States. Guadalupe started the journey to United States at the age of 17. Initially, a relative – a coyote – escorted her to Mexico. Many strangers travelled with her on the 15-day trip to Mexico. They took taxis, buses, and cars, stopping to sleep in cramped houses with strangers along the way. “[It] is so hard because you need [to] sleep [on] the floor with many people, and you don’t have food.” Once they arrived in Mexico, her relative returned to El Salvador and Guadalupe lived in a house in Mexico with other travelers for one month. Before crossing the border, Guadalupe’s traumatic journey from her home to Mexico and then to the border took six weeks. After enduring the journey, Guadalupe said, “And then I cross.”

Guadalupe and the other immigrants in her group crossed the Rio Grande and nervously walked across the desert in the hot sun for about one hour before they were met by patrol. The patrol yelled to the group, began asking questions, and took the immigrants to the Border Patrol processing facility. Guadalupe felt relieved because she knew her auntie in Minnesota was going

to help her. Still she remembers the difficult day so well because immigration officials questioned her for several hours. The officials finally allowed her to go to her cell at 2:00 am. Guadalupe described the conditions: The cell was “so, so cold. Really cold...They give [you a cover] but it is still so cold....” Guadalupe, like other unaccompanied minors, were sent to las hieleras, or “the icebox,” where the immigrants receive a space blanket, pillow, and a spot on the floor. She stayed there for one evening. “So [at] 6:00 o’clock in the morning, I went to the other place like a jail but just for kids. But it’s like a jail because...the lights never turn there. You never know it is night, it is the day. It is morning or night you don’t know.” Guadalupe remained in the detention center for two days, adding to her life of trauma. She eventually took an airplane to a government-sponsored shelter in Pennsylvania and waited for her “auntie’s” help.

Guadalupe stayed in Pennsylvania for one month and started to learn Basic English. The circumstances improved. “This place was good because they give to you food, you know good food...they give to you beds. You can take a shower, you can eat three times...three times and they give to you like snacks...its good.” As Guadalupe continued to wait for her paperwork, time was crucial. Unaccompanied minors under 18 qualify as children. Guadalupe knew her birthday was in one month and this would disqualify her as a minor. “I was worried [all] month too because I [was about to become] 18 years old.” She knew immigration would give her three options. “[I go] back to my country or go to [a] jail for people [who] are older than 18. Or [immigration] put[s] my feet [in] something.” Guadalupe was referring to the ankle monitors undocumented immigrants are forced to wear.

Isolated from her family, Guadalupe was terrified. She had done so many things and worked so hard to come to the United States. “Now [if] I’m... [going to] need to come back,

what [am I going to do? How will I do college] if we don't have money when... We don't have money, I can't keep going to the school." Guadalupe knew returning to El Salvador would eliminate the possibility of finishing school or going to college. Her family was destitute, and her future looked bleak. Although the improved conditions in the government detention shelter felt positive, mentally she continued to live in turmoil because her future was unresolved. She knew she still needed to reach her "auntie" in Minnesota to further her education and help her family back in El Salvador.

Her paperwork was eventually approved, but her frightful journey did not end there. Guadalupe journeyed by bus from Pennsylvania to Minnesota via New York City and Chicago. "I was scare[d]. Scare[d]...scare[d]." The immigration officials gave her money, tickets for the bus, and the schedule. Still she had to make the final trip to Minnesota all by herself, with very limited English skills. "I tried to ask people...I [did not] understand [English]... much [and no one was there to] help on me." Guadalupe felt alone and afraid, not knowing where to find the buses she needed. "One person ... come to me and tell me what I [needed] to do [to] take my bus." She was so relieved to find help. "And I said, 'Thanks God'...oh my gosh. [It] was like a miracle!" Her journey from Pennsylvania to Minnesota via New York City was long and scary. "I needed be careful and pay attention to what I was doing...don't [get] lost because nobody's gonna come and help me, you know?" After 24 hours, Guadalupe finally completed her journey.

Guadalupe arrived in Minnesota to an auntie she barely knew. She had endured almost three months of dreadful experiences and awful uncertainty. Despite this difficult and traumatic journey to Minnesota, Guadalupe still looks at the bright side. She offers advice to others considering such a trip. "[You] need be patient. And whatever [the] situation she is, even if it's no good in the moment, ...everything is gonna be better. Even if it's the worst situation actually,

but it be better.” Despite Guadalupe’s traumatic journey saying good-bye to her family, crossing borders, detention in immigration centers, and lonely bus rides across the United States, all of this was better than staying in El Salvador where she had no hope.

Unfortunately, Guadalupe’s story is not unique. Immigrant men, women, and children choose these journeys because they feel it is their last hope. Like Guadalupe, Esmeralda’s crossing was difficult, traumatic, and she was often on her own. Esmeralda sneaked away from her abusive relatives to the city of San Juan, Guatemala. She could no longer tolerate the abuse, hunger, and loneliness. She phoned her dad and begged him to let her come to the United States to join him, her mom and her brothers. “My dad was like, ‘If you want to come here you pay coyotes a lot of money.’” Esmeralda remembers hearing her mom crying in the background while her dad was on the phone. “So he was mad and my mom was crying. My mom was always crying about me. My dad is really strong. He never cries.”

Esmeralda never told her parents about the abuse she suffered from her relatives. When she finally told them it was the reason she wanted to go the United States, her dad did not believe her. “He never believed me that my uncles and aunts mistreated me so badly. I was afraid to come here, too.” Esmeralda only knew her parents from the short time they lived in Guatemala a few years earlier. She hoped she would feel safer under her parents’ care.

Esmeralda’s father contacted a distant relative who was a coyote in Guatemala. Esmeralda only dressed in traditional clothing her whole life; a dress with flowers and beads and she wore sandals. The coyote picked her up the same day to buy different clothes, tennis shoes and pants that would make the travel by foot a little easier. They took a bus to Mexico where he left her at the border with another coyote. Esmeralda, at fourteen years of age, was alone, with strangers about to cross the dangerous border between Mexico and Guatemala. Esmeralda joined

many others from El Salvador and Honduras at the Mexican and Honduras border. As the group walked through the forest in the early morning, coyotes whispered instructions and assigned a car number to each immigrant. When it was time, the coyotes signaled and the immigrants ran fast towards the border, chased by Mexican immigration. People were running everywhere, and many cars were waiting on the other side of the border. Esmeralda ran to her assigned car, as did many other people. So many people were in the car that several piled-on top of her. Eventually, the car drove the immigrants to a house.

We didn't do anything in this house for a week. We were learning the national anthem of Mexico in case they stopped us. Because the immigration will ask you questions. Then they will ask you to sing the National Anthem. Names of things. They gave us a false ID from Mexico. They were looking for people who looked like us. We needed to memorize the ID card in case they stopped us. We had to memorize the parents of whoever this person was. They made us take the [written] test [to show you have learned the material]... The coyote asked ... questions. They made us sing the national anthem. And then a week later we were ready to go.

Immigrants passing through Mexico are frequently stopped to determine if they have proper Mexican identification. As Esmeralda described, the immigrants acquire fake Mexican identity and learn facts in case they are apprehended. If the immigrants are unable to convince border agents they are Mexican citizens, the immigrants are detained and later sent back to their home country.

Esmeralda and four migrants took a bus. The coyotes did not accompany them. They just gave the immigrants instructions. Eventually the group met the coyote who would take the immigrants across the United States border. This was their last stop before entering the United States. "They gave us food. They were ugly and mean. They were bald and had tattoos. They were Mexicans. Super ugly. I had never seen someone like this before." She was afraid of them. These tattooed men took the travelers to the deep, fast moving Rio Grande. "They gave us life jackets so we would survive [the crossing]." Faced with crossing the border, the choice to go

to the United States in such frightening circumstances was stronger than returning to her home where Esmeralda was abused, hungry, and alone.

They gave us a boat. Like a raft, not a boat, with air. It was super dangerous and I was super scared. There was helicopters of immigration all over the place. They were protecting the Rio Grande border. We were under a tree. And there was a lot of pokey spines in the ground. We were just under these things. We were under a tree and then all the soldiers came. The soldiers from Mexico came and grabbed us. We were three people then. So they just said we should go back [to] the house. The coyotes had some kind of power.

Esmeralda witnessed a scene familiar at the border. It is not uncommon for customs agents to accept bribes.

Then [the coyotes] just brought us back to the house we were at. Then we waited. Then at four pm [the three of us and the coyotes] went again. And there weren't any helicopters then. We went running. It was really, really hot that day. We were so thirsty. There wasn't any water. There was clothes all over the banks of the river, trash and stuff. It was really sad. There was baby clothes just thrown to the side and that made me really sad. So we just grabbed some of the water that was there and we drank it. We were so thirsty. Then we took off all of our sweaters. Only the clothes that we needed. We put our life jackets on and then we crossed. We went in the boat, raft.

The Rio Grande where Esmeralda and her group crossed is situated between Mexico and Texas.

Heat from the sun and deep rivers make the crossing deadly for some migrants.

Esmeralda was the smallest, so the coyotes assured her it would be ok if she was on the other side of the border because immigration would bring her to her parents. She was scared. The coyote told her to find immigration. Instead, she sat down and started crying. The rest of the group went off running. Soon, immigration found her and picked her up. Like Guadalupe's experience, immigration began asking Esmeralda questions. She remained silent. She did not want to share any details about other members of her party. Eventually, a van came to pick her up and when she got in, the people in her party were already in the van, shackled. The people were crying and bleeding. "I was ok because I could go with my parents, not like anyone else. They would get returned." As an unaccompanied minor, Esmeralda would claim asylum, stating

she was looking to reunite with her legal parents in the United States. This approach is not possible for immigrants over the age of 18.

Esmeralda went to a government detention shelter. “It was beautiful because the United States government officials were protecting me. I felt safe.” She noticed some of the young women were pregnant at the house. This was not unusual as many women are raped on their journey north. She was waiting for President Obama to sign the Dream Act that would let her in the United States legally. A lot of the migrant children were waiting, and it was taking months. The young women in the shelter played soccer, became friends, and began learning some basic communication skills in English. Esmeralda experienced safety and peace in the shelter unlike she had for a long time in Guatemala. Within three weeks, President Obama signed The Dream Act legally allowing her into the country as an unaccompanied minor and she was able to go see her family. Her journey was finally coming to an end.

Esmeralda took a plane to Minnesota. Her escort waited with her at the airport for several hours; her parents also waited several hours at the airport.” Ironically, they both were actually waiting in the same area; they just did not recognize one other. “I barely even knew my mom and dad...I was really happy when I saw my brothers who are really big now.” The story of Esmeralda’s crossing; running away from the village of her family, crossing borders on foot with coyotes, adopting a new identity, and detention at immigration facilities, further demonstrates what many immigrants commonly encounter in their effort to reach the United States.

Friera, another woman from Latin America, decided to leave her Ecuadorian village behind after the passing of her grandmother, and join her parents in the United States. Friera’s solo journey from South America lasted four months. She travelled by bus, train, and truck. She

crossed borders by wading through rivers and using a passport provided by her coyote. She finally arrived in Mexico where many migrants might stay for a month before crossing into the United States. Frieria recalled her experience crossing the border.

“I felt really scared trying to cross the river. Because the water was freezing and it was night time.” Frieria crossed the Rio Grande with five other strangers. The group waited for more people but because it was really late, they went ahead without them. As the group crossed the river, everything they carried was swept away. “All of the clothes were just lost in the middle of the river. Everything stayed there.” As she reached land, Frieria was picked up by the U.S. border patrol and taken to immigration. She was in her wet clothes. The border patrol helped her change her clothes and fed her coke and cookies. The U.S. border patrol also began asking a lot of questions. “I was just crying, crying, crying, crying, crying. A lot, a lot, a lot.” Frieria’s emotions took over as she recalled her four-month journey and its continuation.

Once released from the United States immigration center, Frieria was assigned to her government shelter for three months. She was amazed at all the clothes, shoes, and socks the officials had to offer. “They tried to teach me English, but I didn’t understand anything. They gave us treats and chocolate and coffee.” As Frieria described this experience, she smiled and giggled at the luxury.

Having lived with an elderly grandmother, and alone after her grandmother’s death, Frieria was used to her independence. Once she was required to follow the routines and procedures of the immigration shelter, she realized she was no longer able to assert the same kind of independence. “At school,” she complained, “you had to ask permission to do everything. Go to the bathroom.” Frieria expressed frustration throughout the interview in having to learn the English language. The schooling at the shelter was completely immersive so

the teachers never spoke any Spanish. Even after living in the United States for three years, she still struggles to understand or speak in English, choosing only to communicate with teachers in Spanish.

Friera spent three more months at the center before finally flying to Minnesota. She met her mother, brothers, and father at the airport. “It felt really good. I was just crying.” Friera was finally united with her family for the first time. She did not attend school for two more years and was unwilling to share what transpired during this time. She was happy to report that finally, at the age of 18, she enrolled at Washington High School.

Learning about the journeys of women who choose to cross the United States border develops an understanding of what trauma danger, instability, and fear many immigrants experience. Memories of good-byes, strangers, hunger, long walks, dark nights, dangerous rivers, and border patrol agents are too painful for the women to recall without getting emotional. These memories traveled and stayed with them to the United States. Those coming from refugee camps in Africa also experienced trauma, but in other forms. Next, I describe the Somalian women’s entry into the United States.

Entry

Beydan, Hodan, and Dhudi fled Somalia, as small children, on foot with their families due to war and the threat of violence. None could recall the details of that first part of their journey, walking across borders and travelling only with the items they carried. When the African women finally made their second journey to safety, the United States, the travel was not as long, but arrival to the United States was no less frightful. Life in the refugee camps compared with the modernity of the United States was difficult to comprehend. Cawo, Beydan, Hodan, Dhudi left behind difficult living conditions, but were faced with the trauma of adjusting

to a new way of life. Each East African refugee shared her experience entering the United States after living in poverty, separated from home and family members, and experiencing violence. According to the four women, most refugees in the camps dreamed of relocating to the United States to become wealthy as they had seen in the media. Leaving East Africa for the United States brought multiple emotions for the African refugees.

Cawo was both excited to come to the United States and sad to leave Africa. She would finally be reunited with her parents who had lived in the United States for several years. Since she was not yet 18, her father had to return to Africa to finalize her visa and accompany her back to Minnesota. She boarded the airplane with her father, a man she barely knew, leaving behind the only life she had known.

When she arrived, she was reunited with her mother and met her three American sisters and American brother for the first time. Life was still unfamiliar.

I don't know how to speak [English]. I don't know how to get somewhere. It is just confusing. It was like the first time I start summer school and I take the bus. I didn't remember [how to get home]. I took a different bus. I went [to] the wrong [place]. And then the second day I have to learn [the bus route]. I take my address and I have to show the people [what it says]. Then I go two times or three times I am learning. If you can't try, you can learn everything. Yes, you have to try.

Cawo was frustrated and confused in this new place. Mostly, she missed her grandmother who had been her primary caregiver for several years. She remembers, “Every single day I wake up [for] school and then she help me for everything.” Like Guadalupe and many other immigrants, young people must navigate their new world without the people who nurtured them throughout their lives.

Beydan recalled the day they learned her father, mother and siblings would come to the United States. “They send people, like, ‘You guys are going like America!’” She smiled, “We are happy because we want to change life. It is hard to live refugee.” She also remembered the

long journey to Kansas from Ethiopia. When her family arrived they slept for several hours. The new world was completely foreign. The family members were hungry, but they did not recognize any of the food and were afraid to try it. She remembered feeling scared of all of white people. “We don’t even see the Somali.” All four African women mentioned their fear of white people, unfamiliar food, and foreign objects that made the adjustment to their new life scary for many refugees.

Soon after her family arrived in Kansas, Beydan’s father got very sick and the family did not know where the hospital was or what to do. The days he was sick were intense for the family. Finally, after several days, more Somalis arrived in Kansas and they worked together to navigate their new country. Eventually, the family made their final segment of the journey and arrived in Minnesota. Beydan is happy now. “I get... [to live] a beautiful life. [In the] United States I have ... everything I want... Yeah we are happy now. Because we work, we got a good school, we do everything ...together and we [do not] ... live ... separate.”

Beydan’s family is still intact. Unlike the other three refugee women interviewed, Beydan’s father and mother immigrated together and they all share the same home in Minnesota. In many ways, this gives Beydan support many refugees lack.

Dhudi, whose aunties and father were killed in the Somali war, learned her family was chosen to go to America in 2014. On February 8th, 2016 Dhudi, her siblings and her mother left Africa and headed for Nashville, Tennessee. It is common for refugees to wait multiple years to process all the paperwork. Two long flights later, the family arrived tired. A Somali caseworker met the family at the airport and took them to a hotel. Within a couple of weeks they were given an apartment. Dhudi began school but was scared. “All the people are white people. Oh, my god.” The students in her Nashville school all spoke English and were born in America. No one

in her American school understood Somali. Public transportation was limited in Nashville, so the family had difficulty getting to work, the grocery store, etc. After six months, they decided to go to Minnesota to be near an auntie.

Dhudi and her family arrived in a shelter for immigrant families. Soon, they met many Somali families who also immigrated to Minnesota. It was winter, cold and snowy. Like the other East African refugees, Dhudi had never experienced winter before. It took a while for her to brave the weather and spend time outside. Most refugees still comment they are not fully adjusted to the extreme weather.

Hodan's family was happy when they learned their family were coming to the United States. Her mother and sisters gave up their comfortable life in Somalia to find safety in a refugee camp. She giggled as she recalled what her friends in the refugee camps said about America. “‘You can walk... [On golden streets]’....or ‘You aren’t going to wash *‘something’* ...and ‘you can spit on the ground.’ That is what they say. But it is not true. I don’t care.” Hodan is now aware of the reality of living in the United States. It is not as her friends in the refugee camps imagined it would be, but she is still happy to be here.

Hodan also looked forward to “...more education. Better life. Job. Everything that is nice.” Still, she said she was kind of sad and kind of happy to leave Ethiopia. “It feels like you are leaving your friends, family, and country. Then you [are] happy you [are] going to [a] different country and you love their people. That is why [I’m] sad and happy.”

At first, Hodan and her family lived in Portland for one and a half years after leaving Africa. “I don’t know English or nothing. I just speak my language and the [some Oromo].” She met some young Somali women who befriended her. One young woman spoke Somali and translated for her at school. The fellow Somali students helped her learn English and how to

read a little bit. Hodan, her twin sister, her mother, and her younger siblings lived in Portland, but there was no accessible day care for the young children. Facing another hardship in making life manageable, the family eventually moved to Minnesota to be near a friend.

Cawo, Beydan, Dhudi, and Cawo arrived from East African refugee camps to discover adapting to a new country can be hard. Unfamiliar food, people, and foreign items made the adjustment to their new life difficult. Esmeralda, Guadalupe, Frieria, and Angelina's harrowing crossing of the southern United States border eventually evolved into adjusting to their new country. Each woman interviewed experienced a variety of emotions. They left their homeland facing trauma and uncertainty. Their transitions were filled with fear and also hope of the new opportunities awaiting them. New opportunities included formal and continuous education, something the eight women never experienced in their home countries.

All the women in my study experienced trauma throughout their childhood and that trauma continued as they arrived in the United States. This trauma significantly impacted each woman's ability to adjust to her new culture and its opportunities. Students living with these experiences often develop post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD). These students often lack necessary coping skills to manage the impact of life's trauma that can directly impact a student's ability to learn. Students might be distracted by intrusive thoughts about the events. Exposure to violence and other traumatic events can disrupt students' ability to successfully manage emotions. Eventually, these factors make it difficult for individuals to pay attention, study, do well on tests, or even stay in school. The women interviewed must continue to address the trauma throughout their lives while adjusting to new possibilities.

Summary

Chapter four included stories of eight SLIFE women's lives before coming to the United States. Each woman experienced the traumas of poverty, separation and violence in their home country and challenges in their journey to the United States. This trauma significantly affected their academic and life-long successes.

CHAPTER FIVE: TEACHING AND LEARNING

Poverty, separation, violence, terrifying journeys, and entry into the United States brought about trauma for these SLIFE women. In fact, the women's hardships and challenges did not end after they arrived in Minnesota. All the women entered the Minnesota education system and faced many difficulties blocking their paths to success. In the first section of this chapter, I share the stories of SLIFE women: (1) their first days of school in Minnesota and their disrupted education in their home countries, (2) the systemic obstacles faced due to their gender and cultural background, (3) and the hopes each woman held for the future. The second section introduces the teachers of Washington High School. The teachers describe their experiences and challenges working with SLIFE women, including: (1) the teacher's role within the school system, (2) academic realities SLIFE face, (3) family influences on SLIFE women in their school, (4) and systemic expectations for SLIFE (see *Figure 3*, p.92). While neither the women nor teachers were fully prepared to learn or teach, both shared expectations for a productive future.

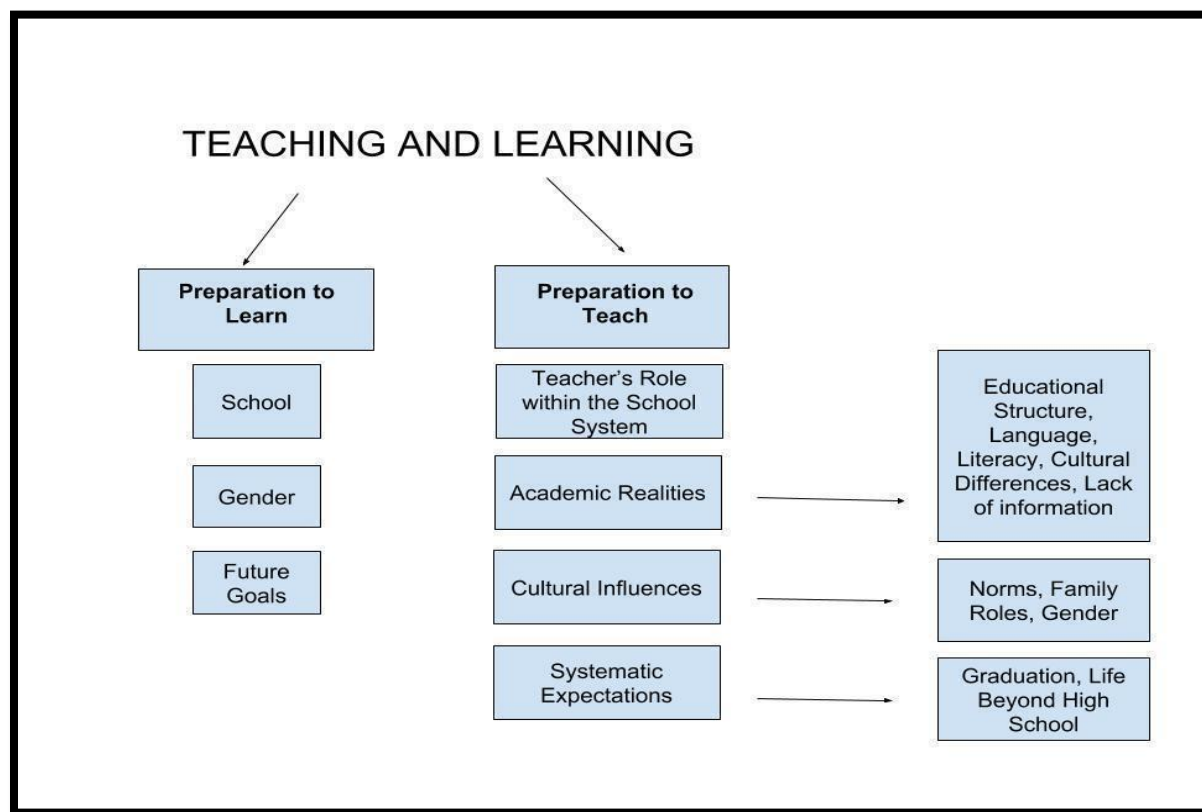


Figure 3: Teaching and learning experiences of SLIFE

Preparation for Learning

SLIFE women, by definition, must overcome their lack of formal or consistent education. These women entered Minnesota schools as high school students and joined students who had received formal education in their native language for nine to twelve years. Attempting to catch up to their peers proved difficult because the educational system in the United States is built on specific expectations, procedures and protocols with which these women had no experience. The SLIFE new to the system found the educational setting very confusing. First the women describe their first days navigating Washington High School and contrast these experiences with their limited education in their home countries. Next, the SLIFE discuss challenges their gender

imposes on them in their new country. Finally, the women share their goals and dreams of the future.

School: A Cultural Shock

Because Guadalupe's family lost their income, she was forced to end her schooling in El Salvador, and her mother decided to send her to the United States. When Guadalupe finally arrived in a Minnesota suburb at her "auntie's" house, she attended a suburban school where she was the only Latino and Spanish speaker. "The first day I came here I [skipped] math class and I went to the lunch because I was confused," Guadalupe remembered. When it was time to go home, she missed her bus and started to cry. She felt very alone and within a week, she made arrangements to move to the city to attend Washington High School, a more diverse setting with other family members she knew from El Salvador.

Guadalupe described her school experience in El Salvador as different than Washington High. Guadalupe attended a local school in El Salvador until age fourteen and remembered having many books and writing a lot. She recalled sometimes students copied the books, sometimes students copied what was on the board, or the teacher dictated to the students. Even as a small child, she remembered always copying words from the blackboard. Guadalupe described her learning in El Salvador to be rote memory, a memorization based on repetition. School was also strict. She specifically recalled one of her teachers. "My English teacher was so, so mean and rude. Because you know it's hard. In my country it's hard when you're starting to learn English, cause it's hard, you know? It's many word that you don't know in other language." Acquiring a language requires time and patience. Guadalupe felt frustrated her teacher was not patient. "But she at the time...she pressures the students really. If you no are a student who needs more time, who needs more patience...needs to be more patient but she, no."

Guadalupe began to cry as she recalled the pressure she felt from not progressing quickly enough in her English class. She referred to her English teacher throughout the interview, hoping to someday prove to this teacher how far she had come in America. Her educational experience highlights the disparity between United States education and her native country.

Today, Guadalupe not only attends Washington High School but also works 20 hours a week as a cook. She remembered living in El Salvador and “doing my homeworks, eating, watching TV and that’s it. I never work before. But when I came here, I needed looking for job.” She uses the income to pay her living expenses and send money to her mother, still in El Salvador. Migrating to the United States has forced Guadalupe to grow up quickly and take responsibility not only for herself, but her family members back home who depend on her.

When you are in your [home] country you think is gonna be easy but when you came here [to the United States] is not easy. Because you don’t talk the language, you can’t understand sometimes. You have many people is racist.

All the women referred to the fear they sometimes feel from racist comments made in the current political environment. “Many things, many things that you don’t think when you are in your own country.” As Guadalupe reflected on her life before her country became unstable, “You don’t think this gonna happen....” Realizing the reality of her life, she continued, “[I have] never been working and [now that I am] here [I’ve] gonna work. So difficult. I never work before.” Guadalupe’s current reality demonstrates how drastic life has changed for some of those who immigrate to the United States.

Esmeralda got lost in Washington High School on her first day. She found herself going around and around Washington’s building. Her school in Guatemala was only ten rooms. Several years ago Esmeralda stopped attending school in Guatemala as an escape from family members’ abuse. Esmeralda enrolled in Washington High School three days after she arrived

from Guatemala. At the beginning of Esmeralda's schooling in Minnesota, friends translated some things for her in Spanish. This year, some classes do not have anyone to translate for her. In addition to striving to understand a new language, ELL students sometimes face discrimination for their lack of English fluency. While Esmeralda's science teacher is bilingual in Spanish, she refused to translate for Esmeralda. Esmeralda recoiled as she recalled a teacher telling her she "shouldn't be here if she didn't speak English." Despite challenges such as this, Esmeralda argued, "People are very different here. Very kind. It is different there." Esmeralda's school experience in Guatemala felt punitive and shaming and teachers had very little resources. She has since realized that although she learned some math and reading, she never got a strong education in Guatemala.

Learning in a new language is a difficult barrier for ELL students. It is also an obstacle for SLIFE to overcome. Frieria, from Ecuador said, "The math is now with parenthesis. It confuses me. And then I quit. It was easy [in Ecuador] because they just spoke Spanish, but here they speak English." Frieria attended a local school in Ecuador but stopped attending when she was ten. Her grandmother no longer had money to pay the fees Ecuadorian schools required.

Angelica was "Scared...scared. I'm no speak English and understand when the people talk with me. So I don't know how to say so I'm scared." Many newcomers, like Angelica, do not understand the language and feel very alone. Angelica was forced to quit school in Mexico for several years because her family received threats from the local drug cartels. Despite having some education in their home country, each Latina quickly recognized the classroom lessons at Washington were significantly more advanced than anything the participants encountered in their home country. This reality made the transition from a Central and South American classroom into the Minnesota classroom overwhelming.

Cawo, Beydan, Hodan, and Dhudi's experience in African schools was significantly different than their experience at Washington High. Cawo took the wrong bus home on the first day of school and ended somewhere far away. She was so confused. She took her address and showed it to the bus driver until she learned the route herself. East African women from refugee camps received little education in a traditional setting, attended refugee schools lacking resources, and attended intermittently. Cawo explained her refugee camp school did not have enough teachers, and, while students took classes such as math and biology, the math "is kind of different." Cawo, who has advanced from non-credit concept courses to mainstream math and biology, complained the classes are too hard. Cawo reported, "I don't understand all of it. I have to study hard."

My research participants expressed confusion regarding some procedures in their new school, such as grading and homework. Dhudi complained about a teacher who had given her an "F." The teacher explained she had not done the homework or taken the test. Dhudi insisted during the interview that "I [am] not doing the homework because I don't know history." Yet Dhudi still did not understand why she received an "F," and she was visibly angry the teacher would not change the grade. Dhudi, and students with similar backgrounds, experienced grades for the first time when they entered United States schools. In their home country, simply attending class was all that was necessary to be considered a good student. SLIFE quickly recognized an "F" is a label indicating a bad student, something no student wants to be classified as. Examples like these illustrate the differences SLIFE women must navigate.

Additionally, considering the background Dhudi and the other refugees experienced in refugee schooling, it is evident most SLIFE women are not fully prepared for the educational system. East African refugee camps consisted of displaced people from several African nations.

As a result, several languages are spoken throughout the camps, and in the schools. The teachers at Dhudi's refugee school spoke different languages, making it difficult for her to understand the lessons. Because of these circumstances, she lacked a strong foundation in any subject area. Dhudi's refugee school was one room made of dirt. The students followed the same routine every day. "[We] sat at a table. We sing Somali, Ethiopia. Teachers come in and then we do the lesson.... First we practice at home, then we go to school. And we take some class. Then we come back home. And eat lunch at home." She remembered days were much shorter and easier at her refugee school.

Hodan also expressed frustration regarding grading policies in the United States. "I got this test and the test come I get 'F'." Hodan said she just does not understand the test or grading. Her solution was to, "Study. To read. To do again." Grades, lack of communication, and misinterpretation of what a teacher does and why she does it are other factors making progress difficult for SLIFE. Language differences frustrated Hodan at Washington. She complained, the teacher "just talk and they just explain to you. They talk and you can't understand it."

Back in Africa, school was not favorable for Hodan. "The teacher[s] are mean. They would slap your hand if you come late." Hodan explained her school was held in a refugee [clay and thatch] hut with chairs and a whiteboard. "There were only notebooks and pencils [available to use]." Hodan only remembers the math lessons and the lessons were simple, including only addition and subtraction. She never learned to read in any language except the few things her mother taught her in Somalia when she was young. Procedural differences, language barriers, and little background education left Hodan with huge challenges in her schooling.

Beydan illustrated the poverty she experienced in the refugee camp and its impact on the refugee schools she occasionally attended. Beydan remembered the number of students in the refugee camp schools. “A lot of [students] they come [to school].” The school was “for refugee people...but they have different [languages].” Beydan recalled the school did not have computers and instead had a table and paper on the wall. “It’s hard like how you live refugee...You know like, if you don’t have like...if you get a dinner, you cannot get a lunch. If you get a lunch, you cannot get a dinner,” she explained. Washington High School provided an environment she never dreamed of back in Africa.

The refugee school was informal, inconsistent, and unsanctioned for East African students. Both the women from East Africa and Latin America brought their unique educational backgrounds to the United States where they all converged in Minnesota at Washington High School. Their backgrounds and lack of understanding of the educational system in the United States made them less prepared for the education the participants would be exposed to now that they were living in Minnesota.

Gender: Breaking from Traditional Norms

The SLIFE women also described how being women impacted their education and life in their home country. To break free from the gender traditions, the women desired something different in the United States. They describe the life and roles of their mothers and friends in their home country, and yet, even while the women envision new opportunities in the United States, their country’s traditional gender roles continue to influence some of their thinking.

While Frieria’s mother was married at 15, Frieria acknowledged she is different from her friends and family in Ecuador around the same age because most are already married and she is not. Although declaring her intention of going to college, later in the interview Frieria shared she

was moving to her boyfriend's place, and they would soon be married. Her conflicted story illustrates her internal conflict of what she will do in her future.

Guadalupe acknowledged it is common for young women in El Salvador to skip high school and have children. Guadalupe stated, "Some people think in [El Salvador it] is not worth [going] to the university... [it] is not worth [it] because even if you ... get your degree, you are [not] going to find [a] job." She continued to describe the women her age in her old neighborhood. "So in the place where I lived, you know my neighborhood...they mostly people just they have [children], no university, no...even no high school." Guadalupe's example demonstrates how difficult it is to stay motivated to attend school and plan for a career when little opportunity exists around you. In their home countries and for some even in the United States, the opportunities are difficult to imagine.

In Africa, marrying young is also common. It is more common for young women to marry at 15 than go to school Cawo shared. Some immigrants marry at young ages, even after arriving in Minnesota. Hodan recalled at least one 17-year-old East African woman at Washington High School who is already married. She said this is the reality for many of her peers at home and resettled in the United States.

Marrying at a young age and motherhood are common for many peers of SLIFE women. This situation becomes an additional obstacle for some young women as they try to focus on their studies and future. Angelina, from Mexico, is a mother of a one- year - old daughter. She is raising the baby with the help of her mother and sister. Her mother felt sad at first, telling her, "[You're too] young ... have a baby." But now, "when she born, [my mother] so happy." After her daughter was born, Angelina attended a school for young mothers where childcare is provided. One month later, she returned to Washington High School to be nearer to friends.

Now, she wakes up in the morning to play with her baby, takes the daughter to daycare every day, and attends school. “It is hard” caring for a child in addition to all other SLIFE challenges; Angelina is lucky to receive support from her family to continue her schooling.

The SLIFE women recognized they were unique from their peers in their home country because the participants broke from the tradition of early marriage. Some SLIFE women do follow their peers and marry young, even in the United States, most forfeiting their education. As a woman, the possibility of motherhood is also a reality impacting her education. Now living in the United States, as women, they had goals and hopes they wanted to accomplish. Next, the participants share these dreams.

Future Goals

The eight SLIFE women believed living in the United States could open up endless possibilities of careers. To be successful in a particular career, students need to learn certain skills, and education can help students develop these skills necessary to enter a specific field. However, for the eight SLIFE women, attaining specific skills through formal education was difficult because of the obstacles described earlier in this chapter. Despite this, with the hope of living the American dream, these women all shared what they would like to do here in the United States.

Cawo and Angelica are scheduled to graduate this spring. The rest of the women will continue with high school for two to three years. None of the SLIFE women could identify specifically the skills or education their dreams required.

Only three of the eight women, Esmeralda, Guadalupe, and Beydan clearly named the type of career they wanted to pursue and their rationale. Esmeralda wants to show her family back in Guatemala that she is more than they ever thought she could be. She wants to become a

cosmetologist. Guadalupe, who left her mother and family behind in El Salvador to complete her education, has appreciated all those who have helped her since arriving in the United States. She stated she wants to help others in similar ways by becoming a psychologist or something where she can talk with and help people. Beydan was also inspired to help people like the social workers and resettlement specialists that assisted her and her family when they first arrived. She remembered the woman who helped her family when they first arrived in the United States was once also an immigrant.

The rest of the women were less confident in what they might do after high school. Although all the women explained they would go to college, their responses seemed to be the assumption of what every high school graduate must do rather than understanding all that college entailed.

Cawo, who will graduate in a few months, has applied to colleges in Minneapolis, California, and South Dakota. When asked about the specific schools to which she applied, she did not remember their names or anything about them. She could not articulate how she had applied and only that her friends told her which colleges to choose. Cawo knew she wanted to be a nurse, but was not clear on the post-secondary path. She did not have any thoughts on how she would proceed to plan for her next year of schooling.

Angelica will also graduate from high school this year. She would like a job as a nurse but for now, Angelica plans to take a break from school for one year and stay with her daughter. She knows she will also need to find a job to help support her mother, sister, and baby, but she has no clear idea of what kind of job she will find.

Dhudi will be returning to Washington next year. Dhudi would like to work in the medical field and admitted sometimes she has good grades and sometimes she does not. She

reiterated that using only English makes everything hard. Dhudi's understanding of going to college included: "saving \$11,000," finishing high school, and having a social security number.

Hodan and Frieria both will return to Washington next year. Hodan proudly announced her plans to go to college for four years to be a dentist. However, in her next sentence, she acknowledged she also might not go to college. Similarly, Frieria explained she plans to be a doctor and in the next breath she proudly announced she is moving to Mexico to marry her boyfriend.

Despite each woman's declaration she would go to college after high school, the interviews revealed the women are not clear on the processes of college or careers. Their insufficient understanding of post-secondary systems prevent SLIFE from defining attainable goals. The women's dreams illustrate their hope; their lack of understanding underscores the difficulty in their future.

Despite the trauma and hardships each woman has faced and continues to face, each expressed gratitude to be in Minnesota and optimism in regard to her new life. The women also shared ideas to ensure other young women like them can overcome obstacles, and the participants reflected on their reasons to hope and to call Minnesota home.

Optimism

Beydan encouraged all Muslim young women who come to Minnesota and face hardships "believe Allah. Allah will. Give you anything ...I tell that person like don't judge like people. ... And get education. Like get education."

Hodan advised Washington's teachers to take the time to know "your inside. Some people think you are mean and not good. So maybe try to understand us. Who we are. We are good or bad or nice."

Some immigrant women choose not to attend school when they arrive in the United States. Still Cawo insisted it is good to have a diploma and go to college. “The school is important. Give your life [and] you can help your family, your mom or dad, you can change your life.” Dhudi, Frieria, Hodan, and Guadalupe also emphatically advised future immigrant women to go to school. “The best thing in America school,” explained Cawo. Hodan reminded young women, “Go to school, don’t get married, and focus!” Guadalupe’s advice is to keep going to school and pay attention. She encouraged students not to be afraid to ask somebody if they do not know something.

Because many people think, other students are gonna laughing about me so they are scare. Or, many people when everybody is thinks so is learning English...think I never gonna can learn English. I think everybody thinks like that first, but it’s not true, you just need to practice and listening and pay attention.

Guadalupe hoped that when a student is too shy, the teacher would pay attention to that student and try to help. Her advice to any immigrant young woman is to be patient. No matter the situation, “even if it’s no good in the moment you know...but everything is gonna be better. Even if it’s the worst situation actually but she is be better.” She is glad she is in the United States. “It just keeps getting better.”

Home: Where is it?

Each woman has been in the United States more than one year. After experiencing trauma in their home country and on their journeys to the United States, they settled in Minnesota. Obstacles did not end once the SLIFE women arrived. Educational gaps, cultural differences, and future plans continue to hinder the women’s relocation. Still, each woman has hope.

Four women eventually want to return to their home country someday. Dhudi still views Somalia as home because that is where she was born. She would like to return one day, but she

wants to wait for life to get better and the killing to stop. Frieria wants to go to Mexico where it is warmer. Angelica is sad because she is not in her country anymore. Someday she hopes to return but for now, Minnesota is safe so that is home. “Washington teachers are so nice,” mentions Guadalupe, “but my country is my home.” That is where she grew up and has her friends. That is where the people she loves are. She does not know when she will be back. The first month she was here she cried all the time, wanting to go back. She missed everything and everybody. But as the days go on, she feels more comfortable. The time to return is “not in her hands.” She would like to go back to visit, but first she wants to finish college here.

Cawo knows she must finish high school and college before she can return to Africa. She misses her grandma a lot. Hodan wants to return to Africa to get married. “I don’t like the boys in Minneapolis!” Then she would like to come back. Beydan calls home “Africa, but where I live now is Minneapolis. Minneapolis is now my home.” Esmeralda is also glad to be in Minnesota. This is her home. “I only have had two years and I feel very good here. I am learning things that are interesting. The kids are better here than in my country, too.”

Each woman experienced various forms of trauma in her country, on her journey, and after arriving in the United States upon entering the educational system. Once arriving to their new homeland, the SLIFE women encountered new challenges and difficult realities, despite clinging to their hopes for the future. The women arrived not fully prepared to learn in the United States educational system. Unfortunately, the teachers who would meet them were also ill prepared to fully teach and serve these women. Next, I describe Washington High School teachers’ experiences with SLIFE.

Preparation to Teach

Washington High School serves an urban neighborhood, educating 1000 students. Two hundred and ninety-eight students at Washington identified as ELL in January 2018.

Washington employs teachers to meet the needs of its SLIFE and ELL students. These include teachers licensed to teach language acquisition, mainstream teachers licensed in core content areas such as Math, Science, Reading, and Social Studies, and elective teachers. Although every teacher at Washington is highly qualified to teach their content area, most feel ill prepared to teach SLIFE. Additionally, SLIFE needs are not fully addressed in the current Minnesota educational structure. First, Washington teachers describe their role and the system within which SLIFE function. Washington teachers also discuss academic realities and difficulties they notice with their SLIFE and ways the teachers feel underprepared to help them. In addition, teachers review the cultural norms, family roles, and gender influences on SLIFE. Finally, teachers evaluate the systemic expectations placed on the SLIFE women.

Washington Teachers

Ms. Carlson, Ms. Klein, Mr. Peterson, and Ms. Miller are licensed in language acquisition or ESL. Ms. Carlson and Ms. Klein work directly with newcomers and SLIFE throughout the day. Carlson teaches two periods of basic language, academic, and cultural skills to newcomer ESL students. The rest of the day she is the ESL department coordinator evaluating new students, administering assessments, and supporting ESL and mainstream teachers. Carlson noted 12 of the 15 current newcomer ELL students identify as SLIFE based on registration information and her observation. Prior to the 2017-2018 school year, Washington ELL students came from the Middle East, Northern Africa, Eastern Africa, Western Africa,

Laos, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. This year, according to Carlson, the population of students is very different, and there are fewer students.

She explained, “I don’t have as big of a variety of nationalities. The majority of my students had already entered the country last spring before they started the school year, and the majority of them are from East Africa.” In the past year, the United States administration significantly reduced the number of refugees and immigrants admitted for asylum. Washington has experienced these restrictions in their enrollment.

Klein teaches SLIFE at Washington, but prior to that served at Jefferson, a local high school designed to serve ESL students in their later years of high school. “A lot of those kids were over 18,” Klein explained. Jefferson students take similar courses as those offered at Washington. “[Jefferson tries to] align [their] school so that basically ... [the students] should be having a science, social studies, math, [and in English] they should move up one level kind of like they do here and [Washington and Jefferson] should be about the same.” At Washington, Klein works with both ends of the spectrum, those who are new, in level one, and those about to graduate in the grade 12 ESL class.

Ms. Miller and Mr. Peterson teach classes specifically designed for ELL learners. Miller comes to Washington High school from a local elementary school where she also taught ELL students. At Washington she works with level two students and co-teaches Physical Science for ELL students. A student in a level two course is “able to produce short phrases, sentences, shorter sentences with minimal academic vocabulary and then by the end, and right now, they move up in their levels and are able to produce longer sentences with added academic vocabulary.” In Physical Science, Miller co-taught with a long-time Science teacher. This was the first time the Science teacher was assigned a co-teaching model. Because of limited

professional development time, the co-teaching relationship was frustrating. The licensed Science teacher structured and instructed the course while Miller provided visuals and pulled out small groups of students to provide extra support.

But a lot of times students get very frustrated [with the lesson] because it moves so fast or like today, we've been working for about three days on a presentation about an atom. Two students who could be identified as SLIFE got up and didn't say anything during their presentation.

The assignment frustrated Miller and the students because it required so many skills. Miller assisted the students in preparation, “working one full day [on how to] put your name at the bottom of the slide.” During the three days she also explained vocabulary, an article the students were expected to read, the concept of an atom, how to write this understanding in text, and how to talk about these ideas in English. Experiences like this illustrated the challenges teachers and students must face. During our interview, I asked Miller which of her newcomers might be SLIFE. She immediately admitted several students might fit the criteria described, but she did not have any documentation or information that explained which students would need additional supports.

Peterson teaches a social studies concepts course for newcomers as well as the grade eleven ESL classes. This social studies course, necessary because of limited English and social studies skills, does not count towards graduation credits further limiting an ELL or SLIFE's ability to fit in all credit required courses. The Social Studies Concepts course tries to build a bridge between credit-bearing social studies classes by emphasizing background knowledge and skills in reading and writing. Peterson said,

In a way, it's sort of a buffer for a brand new student, to not go right into the high stakes “I need to pass this standards-based class for graduation.” My task is to try figure out how to make that as useful as possible.

Peterson still feels like what “I really need to do is get a PhD on SLIFE because I don’t have the skills currently to feel good about teaching about reading.” While trained to meet the needs of English language learners, Peterson does not have the training to teach beginning reading and feels inadequate at meeting many of the needs of SLIFE.

Similar to Peterson, Scott teaches a non-credit core course Math Concepts. Scott is licensed to teach secondary math. Although she does not have an ESL license, for the past 12 years, she has worked with ELL students. She helped design a course, Math Concepts, to “meet the needs of our students who are placed in high school based on their age, but haven’t had the educational experiences that a typical high school student would have had.” The Math Concepts course is meant to give the students a year to develop as many strategies as possible to be successful in high school credit bearing mathematics.

In summary, Washington provides non-credit concept courses in Social Studies, Math, and Science. These courses are intended to fill a learning gap that is sometimes as great as eight years. Rarely are SLIFE fully prepared to enter mainstream courses. Most students receive a passing grade just for attending these courses and becoming familiar with basic terms.

The final three teachers, Ms. Matthew, Mr. Thompson, and Ms. Smith are licensed in their subject area. I chose to interview them because they teach mainstream and elective courses many ELL and SLIFE take within the ELL program. All three have limited training in language acquisition and admitted their knowledge of SLIFE was minimal. Matthews teaches a mainstream Social Studies course that includes students who completed Social Studies Concepts. Some of these students are in their second year of English, still trying to catch up on the years they are behind in school. This is Matthew’s second year at Washington, third year total as a teacher. During her first year she co-taught with Peterson.

[Last year] I loved co-teaching. I loved that I brought the content and he brought the language development. We merged those two ideas. I had to let go of not teaching all the standards. He had to let go of sometimes these kids had to be pushed a little bit more. ... So if it came to activities that we would do around writing, he took a lot of the lead for that – how we were writing paragraphs – how we were putting these paragraphs together – how are we finding reading strategies. He would help differentiate the text. But I was teaching the content. We were both very mindful of including every culture in our class in teaching the content they could understand.

Matthew's co-teaching illustrates a successful collaborative experience. Each teacher contributes equally to the instruction, identifying the best ways to meet all students' vast needs.

This year, Matthews teaches World History without any ELL teachers like Peterson with which to plan or instruct, or support individual students. Last summer, the administration decided to provide ELL students the opportunity to be in a more advanced class with the English support of Peterson. The administration believed "cognitively they would be able to do the work - that's never been the question – but their skills were not high enough to meet the rigor of the writing and reading." Despite the supports Peterson provided to the advanced class, it was too difficult for most ELL students to maintain the class's pace and rigor. As a result, the majority of those who originally signed up for the advanced history class moved into Matthew's less difficult mainstream credit class. Matthews described her struggle meeting the needs of her students.

I try really hard to meet the demand of these kids, but I also have 30 other kids in the class. So if I have three students out of 30 who are lower ELL, it's harder when I have 27 other kids that are ready to go or pass what we are doing... I had students who never had education before and were put into a junior class. They were new to the country within less than one year and didn't know anything. Although there were kids who had been here for three or four years who could read and write okay, they could not speak well. So the question for the class was how do you teach the content and meet the standards when English is not their first language and I'm trying to get them proficient in the content and not proficient in the language. How are you able to balance that?

Teachers must differentiate for a wide gap of students despite limited training or skills on the variety of needs. Matthews explained, currently, one third of her students are ESL. Before our

interview, she was unaware of the term SLIFE. After I defined the term, she estimated she might have five SLIFE in her class.

Two elective teachers, Thompson, a music teacher, and Smith, a technology teacher work with many of the SLIFE and ELL students. All newcomers at Washington take elective classes in their first year in order to accumulate some credits. These elective courses are participatory, requiring less literacy skills. Despite both elective teachers lack of knowledge of effectively instructing ELL students, they teach a large percentage of these students.

Many of Thompson's students take a general music class designed to be hands on and creative. "I want students making music. Just like in an art class the students would paint or sculpt. Hands on, making music yours." He acknowledged he was not familiar with SLIFE until I defined the term in our interview. Nine years at a local middle school, Thompson worked with a small number of Hmong students, mostly second generation. He leaned back aghast, "It wasn't till I got to Washington where...Sometimes three quarters of my class have English as a second language." He believed a class like his provided a great opportunity for ELL students to practice risk taking. Students can express themselves, problem solve, work with a partner, work on their own and figure things out without a lot at stake.

Smith teaches photography, video, and technology skills. The technology skills class has evolved into a basic computer skills class aimed at students who are "new to the computer or have not used computers much at all." As needs started emerging for SLIFE students and technology, Smith met with administration and the ELL department to discuss creating a class to address student needs. She recognized, "Students struggled to do the work because they didn't have the skills to access technology, not that they were not capable for the actual assignment." Smith believed skills such as knowing parts of a computer, turning on the computer, using the

Internet, emailing, using Google docs, using a mouse, and keyboarding were necessary for student success. Smith also noticed some English grammar becomes part of her lessons as she teaches students about capitalization, punctuation, and sentence structure. Her classes are mainstream, and one third are ESL students.

Washington teachers desperately want to meet the needs of all of their students. Despite this urgency, teachers are frustrated and overwhelmed. Academic realities made teachers feel less prepared.

Academic Realities

While the Washington curriculum provides courses to support ESL students and satisfy Minnesota legal requirements, these courses struggle to meet the needs of all students, specifically SLIFE. Washington teachers assigned to meet these needs describe their realities within the current Minnesota system. The next section covers current educational structures, language barriers, literacy levels, and cultural differences.

Meeting the needs of SLIFE is challenging. A SLIFE may be: the student who has never seen a book, the student who has never read a book, and the student that can read in their language. The first three types of students are assigned the same classes at Washington the first year. The SLIFE may also take a second year of non-credit bearing, concept courses to build foundational skills. But after one to two years, all ELL students are assigned the same mainstream courses as a student who has been in an American school for nine years. Just two years after arriving in the United States, SLIFE sit among all levels of students, while they are still learning English, background information, and basic math, reading and writing skills.

All students enrolling in Washington's district with a home language other than English take a language assessment, World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Screener.

This assessment is available online or in a paper version, assessing the four language domains: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The purpose of this score determines if the students enter the ELL program as well as their instructional level for ELL.

Currently, Washington High School has two levels for newcomers, generally students living in the country less than one year, and grade level ESL classes for those needing less ELL support. Most of these courses are credit-bearing, or provide credits towards a student's graduation. Students entering high school are required by the Minnesota Legislature to offer all students a four-year graduation plan, no matter what level or ability they come with their first year. This means all ELL and SLIFE must learn English *and* take all required credit-bearing courses within four years. Unfortunately, schools feel forced to enroll a SLIFE in credit-bearing courses immediately to ensure she will graduate within the four-year mandate. Washington teachers describe their frustrations of the current educational system.

Educational Structure

Wanting to provide the best environment for SLIFE, Washington teachers quickly realized structures exist within the system that complicate the educational experience for SLIFE. Teachers describe their initial experiences with the newcomers' reactions to their new environment and, how over time, the teachers are learning to temper the shock of the new education system for these students. The teachers discuss teaching SLIFE how to organize, schedule, and learn study skills to help them adjust to new school expectations.

Washington teachers find the first days for SLIFE are often complex. The first day that Carlson taught at Washington, she had a student who did not know how to use a pencil sharpener. "I just never thought, I had never experienced someone like that." She took the class to the computer lab and the student had no idea how to use a mouse. She realized, "It's just

some of these basic things that we totally take for granted that there were these kids that had never experienced those things before.” She noticed many newcomers enter school without the understanding of an academic culture.

You would give a notebook to a kid and they didn't know what was upside right or upside down....You would give a student a book, a simple children's picture book and they would look at it like it was the most incredible thing they had ever seen. Or they would take it and not even know what to do with it. Just turning pages of a book, they had to learn how to turn pages in a book.

Students at this level of literacy are considered early emergent readers, common for children birth to six years old in literate areas. When students first arrive to Carlson’s class, her practice is to let kids sit and observe.

Carlson recalled one student who sat in awe the entire hour, just looking around the classroom. Eventually he got up and started walking around the classroom, touching things. She remembered this student in particular; he walked around “with his mouth open and his eyes open wide like saucers, the whole year. Everything was incredible to him and amazing to him and new to him.” She acknowledged that the goal for him when he first arrived was how to hold a pencil correctly, know what was up and down in a book, how to turn the pages of a book, swipe on an iPad and push things on an iPad. The computer was not manageable for him because he struggled with the mouse and keyboard. He enrolled in concept classes and started to learn his letters, a pre-K concept, and during his first and second year of school. In his third year, the student took co-taught mainstream math and science courses for credit. Regardless of ability or success, SLIFE automatically advance to ensure they meet the Minnesota Legislature four-year requirements. This student moved from zero math skills to an intermediate algebra class in three years. “I know that he's struggling; I know that he still gets a lot of things scaffolded and adapted for him.” It is not enough. Carlson knew he received passing grades this year because

he tried hard. He does not wander the hallways as much as some other students do, but he does skip. He does make some bad choices as far as school goes. “I mean, it's impossible. I don't want to say they give up, but it's so difficult that it's like, ‘Why try? It's just too hard.’” She acknowledged this happens with many of the students; when school is just too hard and it is too much, the students just give up.

Other teachers noticed a student who might be SLIFE right away. Peterson watches behavior and how students interact with the environment. He said it is important to observe how students interact with school resources such as paper, pencils, and rules. But he acknowledged the most difficult part is finding out to what degree the students have experienced school. It is difficult for students and families to communicate their academic experiences. There is such a wide variety of educational experiences; some students attended school; some never attended school – or some attended intermittently.

Miller, an experienced ESL teacher, recently moved from working with elementary students to teaching high school students. She described similar experiences in elementary students’ stories of coming to the United States, but the high schoolers are a lot more articulate about life before the United States, and these experiences seem to have affected their learning more. She noticed in elementary, everyone's learning how to be a student at a young age, but in high school, everyone already knows how to be a student. Miller realized SLIFE in high school are still “learning how to be a student which adds difficulties to them and then their experiences affect their emotions and their trauma.” She noticed this in their reactionary behaviors and defense mechanisms. Miller recounted seeing “a student just freaking out and throwing phones and papers and getting super mad at the teacher for something very, very small. I feel like

elementary kids do that, but it's on a bigger scale for high schoolers.” Teachers noted some SLIFE are not experienced at managing emotions or behaviors in an academic setting.

Miller and Matthews also noticed a lack of ‘soft skills’ such as organization. Miller practices routines of the classroom with her high school students: she teaches them how walk into the classroom, where their pencils are stored, what to do when they are done with activities. Miller stated, “It's like giving students pencils; we went through 500 pencils in the beginning of the year and just the ability to keep your stuff together for some reason has been very frustrating this year.” These skills should be added to list of lessons SLIFE must still learn in the U.S. educational system.

Smith, the technology teacher, informally teaches the basics of Minnesota high school behavior in her technology elective course. She explained how to earn credits and what a GPA means. She understands ELL students are so confused they often just take the courses people tell them not knowing how or why grading works. She also noticed students struggle with academic behavior such as sitting in their seat, raising their hand, or getting attention if they need help. Many students, perhaps due to cultural differences or language confusion, do not seem to understand time management such as following a bell and understanding where they need to be or what “late” or “absent” means. Other organizational skills and school procedures are unfamiliar like bringing a note or getting a pass; things most students in Minnesota schools have done their whole life. These typical behaviors and procedures in school must be learned along with all the academics.

Matthews also observed an early indicator of a student’s educational experience was the interaction with the lessons and content. When instructed to go home and study, SLIFE had no idea what “study” meant. Many of her SLIFE never had to study for anything in their home

country. While many SLIFE did a very good job copying from the board and putting it on paper, most did not cognitively understand “why” and how to answer the questions if the answer was not specifically on the paper. Matthews stated, “The ‘why’ part they really struggle with. So they don’t know why because I didn’t tell them why.” SLIFE with some education in their home country still experience these types of differences in the U.S. educational system

Thompson, the music teacher, recognized how some of his ELL students really struggle with the structure of Minnesota schools such as schedules and rules. He acknowledged the environment the students grew up in was informal where you could come and go or do whatever you wanted. Thompson stated:

And then all of a sudden, here are bells and times and expectations for sitting still and having the proper equipment to do [their assignments]. Not being able to eat, talk, or go to the bathroom anytime you wanted to. It seems like a normal human thing to do any of those. I can see why some kids struggle with that, and then become a little embittered maybe. I’m being treated poorly. I’m just being me. Doing whatever I’ve always done, and then all of a sudden I can’t do that? I wonder how I’d feel if I had some new rules imposed on me that were out of my norm, and how difficult a day would be to navigate. And then people upset with me if I didn’t quite do it how...I’m supposed to know, but I don’t.

These expectations can be frustrating and challenging.

SLIFE not only begin high school two to nine years behind their peers academically due to missed or informal schooling, but these examples also illustrate the SLIFE are not familiar with the system of schooling. The teachers realized from big ideas like organization, schedules, and study skills to small tasks such as holding a pencil and notebook must be modeled and taught, even before high school content can be introduced. The structure of our U.S. Schools is just one obstacle SLIFE must navigate to be successful. Understanding the English language is another problem getting in the way of SLIFE understanding high school level content.

Language

Washington operates as an English immersion school, all core subjects are taught in English, and because of that, language obstacles are a reality for SLIFE. Washington teachers describe translation limitations among some students who speak a rare language. They also describe the difficulty of having to grade students based on knowledge of written and oral content while the students are not proficient in the English language. Finally, teachers recall the frustration their students and they share when unable to adequately communicate.

Students or teachers fluent in multiple languages may use translation to support students; however, it is not an option for many students whose home language is rare. Miller described a student who spoke Ancient Mayan. When the student and her mom immigrated to the United States, they were detained at the Mexican and U.S. border. The woman was jailed long enough to learn Spanish from her fellow detainees. Although she learned how to speak some Spanish, she does not know how to read or write in Spanish at all. Her parents only speak Ancient Mayan at home. While her new friends speak Spanish, and she picks up a lot of academic English at school, no one is able to communicate with her family in their home language; therefore, Miller is unsure of her educational background or to what extent she understands school content.

Another reality teachers struggle with is quantifying an English learner's rate of progress in class. Grading ELL students on content versus English skills is inconsistent from teacher to teacher according to Washington ELL teachers. Protocols are stated, but teachers independently decide how to grade assignments and what evidence is needed to pass a course. Miller described one student who would only communicate in Spanish. The teachers broke protocol and had her repeat the level one course three years in a row. Eventually the ESL teachers felt pressure from administration to move her up to the level two class, even though she was not making any

progress. The teachers, recognizing she was likely dealing with other things such as trauma or lack of skills, began putting some special education evaluations in place. Unfortunately, before that happened the student decided to drop out of school. This is one example how, because of the system, the teachers fail to adequately meet the needs of SLIFE and ESL students.

When frustrated, many SLIFE can only express themselves in their native language. Matthews recalls many times being yelled at in Somali. Often, fellow students that have lived in the United States for a while can calm their friends down by talking in their native language. Matthews watched one student tell another to, “Take a deep breath. The teacher is not out to get you. They’re going to help you. You’re going to have to relax a little bit, and then explain why you’re frustrated.” SLIFE face the challenge to communicate effectively when frustrated.

Not understanding the English language is an obstacle SLIFE face. As described, some may have others to assist in translation, but often students must figure things out for themselves. This obstacle means students are hindered, frustrated, and do not have access to the same knowledge as their peers.

Literacy

Literacy includes the awareness of sounds of the language, awareness of print, and the relationship between letters and sounds. Another reality SLIFE bring with them is the varying degrees of exposure to literacy in any language. Literacy can also be a sign of whether a student has numeracy skills. Numeracy is the ability to reason and to apply simple numerical concepts. SLIFE enter American high schools with little to no exposure to either literacy or numeracy, concepts generally understood in primary years of schooling.

Illiteracy is a daunting barrier to overcome for SLIFE. Klein remembered a student who entered her level one newcomer class as an early emergent reader. She had never learned to read

or write in any language. Klein attempted to identify who had literacy in their home language by asking students to take a sheet of paper and write, in any language, about a best friend. This student could only come up with two sentences because she was trying to write in English since that was the only language she knew how to write in, and she did not know that many words. She was able to say something like, "I have a friend and my friend is" that was it. She really could not write anything about a friend. This example shows the academic level of SLIFE can be equivalent to a preschool student.

Smith, a Washington High technology teacher, assigned her students to write a few sentences about themselves, using sentence starters like "My name is ____" or "My favorite sport is ____." She remembered how one of students she identified as SLIFE completed the assignment in Oromo. When Smith asked a fluent Oromo speaker to translate it, the translator said it did not make any sense. Smith "thinks she is either embarrassed about it or tries to hide her lack of education and knowledge because she wrote a whole assignment that she claimed was a story...She cares about doing well, she follows along with all of the procedures and does what she is supposed to." This situation shows how difficult it is for teachers to assess the level of literacy in their SLIFE.

While many SLIFE from refugee camps have little to no schooling, SLIFE from Central and South America tend to have interrupted schooling, and, therefore, most of them have some understanding of how to read. "I can't think of a single [Central American student] that hadn't had some schooling at home," Klein recalled. SLIFE arrive in Minnesota missing school for three to five years, but most of the students are literate in Spanish. Klein stated, "They might not be reading past a second or third grade level, but they've already got literacy down." Literacy

includes understanding symbols have sounds, combining them to forms words, and combining these words to create meaning. Klein continued,

Literacy [knowledge] is a huge boon because you only learn to read once and then you transfer that skill into a new language. They've got that behind them. Now they just need to learn the vocabulary. They are already ahead of the kids who are preliterate.

Klein noticed any Latino student with some schooling generally has exposure to basic math skills and science in some cases. Klein recalled, “A lot of times we see our Spanish speakers grow faster just because they have much more of an educational background.” Overall, Washington teachers noticed Latina students appear to enter U.S. educational system with literacy skills that support them as they fill in gaps.

Many of the young women interviewed mentioned how hard mainstream math and science are at Washington High School. Science and math courses require high-level math and reading skills, skills most SLIFE have yet to acquire. Without a background and time to develop strong literacy and numeracy skills, SLIFE struggle to overcome yet another obstacle in their educational journey

Cultural Differences

Students arriving from different cultures bring with them different ways of thinking about learning and viewing the world. This misalignment in thinking further frustrates and confuses many SLIFE leaving teachers feeling less prepared. Students sitting in Minnesota classrooms for the first time are unfamiliar with teacher methodology and expectations. Washington teachers describe the struggle their SLIFE have with new methods of instructions, learning to use creativity, and understanding grading. Whether it is the worldview of the students, new options in learning, or choices made in their native country impacting their learning in the United States,

SLIFE must shift some of their thinking to succeed. This shift can entail anything from awareness of a different way of thinking to a full assimilation into the new culture.

Ms. Scott, a Washington math teacher, described one example of cultural difference. She recalled some Latino students who were frustrated with Washington High School's method of math instruction. In many cultures, according to Scott, math is taught using direct instruction, where students learn formulas and procedures, and practice them until they are mastered. In contrast, like many U.S. high schools, Washington High uses methods that are indirect, designed for students to dialogue mathematically and discover concepts. She explained research has shown methods used in the United States aid students in understanding mathematics more deeply, building a foundation for science and engineering skills. Students do not perceive Scott is doing her job when she directs them to a notebook or resource for help. They think, "She doesn't help us, she doesn't teach us." Scott realized students new to these methods must first learn how to interpret these methods and she must convince them of their value.

Smith, a technology teacher at Washington, illustrated another example of cultural contrast. Smith noticed many of her African students struggled with being creative or making something up. The students often wanted strict guidelines. Some students got mad when Smith did not let them get answers from other people. She has learned from her students that in their native country's school, teachers gave answers and it was acceptable to copy things from other people. The emphasis was on having the information. That was how they learned. The students' first schooling experiences valued education as a community or a peer practice, where everyone learned together. Students in Smith's class frequently got angry, and felt she wanted them to fail because she did not help them. Smith felt conflicted, wanting to support the students

but also wanting an indication of what each student is capable of doing which she believes they must indicate independently.

SLIFE also often feel frustrated because they misunderstand grading. Matthew, one of Washington's social studies teachers who worked with combined groups of SLIFE, ELL, and mainstream students, stated that SLIFE often complain "they aren't learning fast enough, or that they don't get it, or that they want their grade to be better than it is because they just can't express their knowledge." Matthews struggled to find the balance of supporting the learning her SLIFE and ELL students do make while maintaining rigorous standards set by the department of education. Washington math teacher, Scott, also struggled with her students' understanding of grades in Minnesota schools. Every time Scott gave some sort of assessment, one student would write something nonsensical. Each time Scott tried to meet with her, the student would rip the paper up and throw it on the floor frustrated and unwilling to listen to any feedback. Then the student would write multiple emails each week wondering, "Why you keep giving me 'F'?" Washington teachers and SLIFE continue to struggle with these misunderstandings.

Somalia's negotiation culture conflicts with Washington's grading system according to Klein, a veteran ELL teacher. "There's this whole, 'I'm going to come to you and argue, about why I don't have an A? Why don't I have an A?'" explained Klein. Students think if they show up and do the work they should have an "A." Frequently, because of low numeracy skills SLIFE do not understand averaging and they struggle with grades changing throughout the course. For example, Klein says she is asked, "Miss, why F, why F, why F?" - 400 times a quarter. She also explained students did not care if their grade was a D; any grade was a failure because they did not have an A. She does not notice this with Spanish speaking students, but primarily East

African students, perhaps because the grading structure is so new to those not from a familiar system.

Washington English language teachers explained the United States is a “goal driven culture” always considering “what we want for our future” It is a culture often identified as “individualistic.” The teachers noticed people in individualistic cultures view themselves separate and independent from others. Many other cultures in the world are “collectivist,” defined by the relationships and connections people have with each other. In the classroom, these differences are evident according to Washington teachers. Students from collectivist cultures frequently request working together and getting help from their friends. Students completing assignments and assessments often want to work in groups and help one another. Washington teachers must routinely explain to SLIFE this is not acceptable in the United States.

According to Carlson, Middle Eastern, Eastern European, and Latino immigrant students seem to understand the American educational culture emphasizing preparation for the future. The structure may be different than their home country, but it is similar enough to be able to navigate. According to Carlson, East African students face the biggest cultural differences relating to education. Students from war torn countries did not know what was going to happen to them within five hours much less five years. Some students come from places where they scrounged for food from day to day to day. Accessing basic needs - food, clean water, and shelter - consumed much of their time. Americans, conversely, save money for the future and think ahead, understanding the necessity of setting goals and understanding the cultural structures to meet those goals. Planning ahead for the future is less common for East African SLIFE. Planning for the future is a thought process that must be learned and practiced by refugee students in order to succeed in the American culture. Carlson recognized for many, the

only thought about the future is "I want to be married and have children someday"; not, "I'm gonna study this now so I can be this in the future." Many students do not know the career possibilities available for them. They do not yet recognize how education can help them attain specific goals related to possible jobs.

Another area of mindset needing to be examined is that of motivation. The level of motivation is noticeably different among different cultures. Peterson explains growing up in a refugee camp people sit around waiting for food to arrive. "There is not a lot to do and so their way of being is just to be." He described the way he sees many of his students as "checked out." This perceived disconnect by the students creates frustration for Peterson, who must constantly redirect some SLIFE. "They're just here - the idea that you apply yourself toward something ...I think that concept is not part of their experience for those students." As an ELL teacher, Peterson understands some SLIFE are unaware of their role as students, but many non-ELL teachers view many of these students as not caring. Some behaviors he observed from his students include:

a constant "spaced-outedness," like acting like you're not realizing this a class; constant conversation about things that clearly have no connection to what we're trying to do; or the body language like you sit down and the administrator starts talking and you're sitting the other way; all those things that any student that are "checked out" would do, but that's just their standard mode of being.

He acknowledged it must be difficult for the students because they feel like "what the heck, the guy's always on my case." Peterson is constantly trying to figure out how to involve students, shifting their mindset from just being to the role of engaged students in school.

Another cultural shift involves new or different subject areas in the American educational system. Music is not proper or sanctioned in some Muslim and East African cultures, leaving many students with little background in this art form. Thompson promotes his music class at

Washington to combine a hands-on, enjoyable class where students learn the patterns and rhythms of music while building confidence in creativity and risk-taking. Many newcomers from East African cultures choose to enroll in Thompson's music class.

SLIFE in Thompson's music course often enter class with limited exposure to music. However, Thompson built the course assuming students have exposure to western music, like soundtracks in movies. Much of the pop music requires you to tap a steady beat. However, a lot of the students come from cultures where music is nonexistent. "They've really struggled to find the steady beat, which made my group drumming curriculum for the first part of the whole semester just fall to pieces." He admitted he must learn more about other styles of music in the Muslim culture in order to engage certain students. SLIFE also need to expand their understanding of this and other new concepts.

Refugee students arriving at Washington High School, or any Minnesota high school, enter with limited knowledge of structural and school norms, the English language, and literacy skills. Students also must make shifts in learning approaches, understanding collective versus individualistic cultures, planning educationally for the future, or understanding new ideas. These obstacles, combined with SLIFE women's traumatic background, make academic growth seem insurmountable. The teachers dedicated to instruct them also recognize their own gaps in knowledge to support SLIFE. Next I describe the lack of information most high school teachers have and the impact of that on SLIFE.

Lack of Information

All eight Washington High School teachers interviewed said they lacked training and information to educate SLIFE effectively. Teachers emphasized the importance of specific

information regarding academic, social, and emotional needs of their SLIFE, and training in best teaching practices in order to meet those needs.

Currently, at Washington, there is no documentation provided to teachers on the SLIFE status of students. Four teachers specifically mentioned the need for formal identification of these students so they could better understand possible supports they may offer. Miller, the ELL teacher who works with newcomers in year two, admitted she had no idea who would qualify in the category of SLIFE. “That would be really good information, I think, and that would guide their supports.” If a student is identified as pre-literate, the teacher might be prepared in advance to provide appropriate level text and direct support. Miller is a first-year teacher at Washington and acknowledged other people may know that information from years past. She still wished it would be written down so new teachers like her would also have this necessary information for planning purposes.

During the interview, Miller began to consider which of her level two students might actually qualify as a SLIFE. She initiated the conversation with me describing how some of her students refuse to even look at their assignments. Many get mad and walk out of the classroom. Miller then considered the need to provide reading material at different levels for her students. This was something she had not explored before and she was eager to make the adjustments immediately.

Ms. Matthew, social studies teacher, suspected she had SLIFE but since there was no official written identification, she was unclear as to which students might fit into that category. She wished the district had a system to inform teachers of SLIFE status.

There’s not like a piece of paper that has a checkmark that [the students] are “SLIFE” which can make it very challenging, because when you have a kid who does not know how to even organize themselves, you get them a folder and a notebook and they have no idea what to do with it. ... As I would say “copy this down” and they would just pick a

random piece of paper and write it down. They had no idea what to do with that paper afterwards.

Without identification of SLIFE in advance, Matthews used trial and error to understand the level of each student. Matthews eventually realized she needed to explicitly teach the organizational skills she wanted the students to use. “This is how you keep a notebook...this is where you put your papers...this is a binder.” This process uses precious time. Matthew’s realization of how specific she must be in training some of her students was beneficial. She acknowledged knowing which students would need this guidance in advance could reduce frustration for both student and teacher.

Once a student is identified as SLIFE, the next difficulty for teachers is understanding the level of education the student has experienced. ELL teacher, Peterson, admitted it is hard to learn about each SLIFE’s experience because of language and cultural barriers. Sometimes the parents are able to provide some information, but the education received in a student’s home country often does not translate to the American school system. Peterson only begins to learn about students’ backgrounds after they have been in Minnesota for longer periods of time. Even still, Peterson explained,

It takes serious work to get students to be comfortable to tell you a lot about Africa. I know a bit from a couple of years ago [when] I had a group of boys. For whatever reason, I broke through the barrier and they would tell me about funny differences.

Relationships must be built before many ELL or SLIFE are comfortable enough to share events in their lives that caused trauma or embarrassment. Once a teacher is able to learn more about a SLIFE, the teacher is better able to specifically meet her needs. Peterson worked with SLIFE for three years, and realized only in the last year, the students had begun to trust him enough to tell their stories.

The elective teachers at Washington High School, Thompson and Smith, reported the district provided very limited teacher training on helping ELL or SLIFE; it was only through trial and error that teachers discovered the significant gaps between what teachers expected of these students and what these students could do. One example of this was Washington's music teacher Thompson's experience. He described the process he went through to discover for himself what level he needed to start at with some of his ELL students.

When Thompson arrived at Washington, the curriculum he taught for years and perfected for English speakers did not work. He remembered the first days when the kids would smile and nod, and he would assess them and the students could not tell him a thing. He knew he was not communicating well because they did not follow his instructions or modeling. Thompson stated,

I do remember being surprised getting the first batch of written work back the first semester. It was just a brief quiz. And ok, ok. Some of these kids can hardly write their own name, let alone explain complex concepts.

Thompson's expectations were destroyed when he realized students struggled to do the most basic steps. He tried to show things in different ways, but the students were not catching on. So he had to do everything differently. He slowed down and tempered his expectations of what they could comprehend. Even though music is hands on, Thompson still had elements of instruction he needed to teach through discussion such as defining certain musical terms. He found giving students the choice to draw a concept rather than write it was not helpful either. Many of the students never had an art class and could not express themselves in this way. Thompson confirmed it is hard. He recognized, "teachers are trained to work with classrooms of kids who come sit in their straight rows, bring all of their stuff, and do exactly what they are told." Teacher training does not always prepare educators for students who do not follow the

expectations. Now, Thompson is learning how to teach a different kind of student. Meeting each student's need is his focus.

Having just learned SLIFE's definition from me, Thompson began to reflect on his students who may meet the criteria. He recalled a lesson where he was having students find four measures in the music. He did not anticipate any difficulty in this task because it only required students to count to four. "And now that I think on it, some kids did struggle with that and so did I. This was a frustrating day." Understanding some SLIFE have little or no numeracy background explained why some students could not count the beats.

Miller, who teaches technology, also wished more training was available to understand ways to support the academic and emotional needs of many ELL and SLIFE. Miller recalled a recent conversation with a student assigned to do a presentation she did not understand. The student complained to her, "'She hates me... She's always yelling at me because I didn't do this.'" Miller's example illustrates how a lack of understanding by teachers frustrates SLIFE.

Supporting teachers with strategies to meet SLIFE's academic needs is critical according to Washington teachers. Washington ELL teachers also stated it is imperative that assisting staff understand SLIFE's mental and social needs. Trauma, as evidenced by some behaviors, is a significant reality for SLIFE. ELL lead teacher Carlson explained many SLIFE do not have executive functions most American children develop at three and four because of their limited exposure to literacy, schooling, and academic concepts in their home country. Many SLIFE also struggled with untreated PTSD that can delay intellectual development.

According to Carlson, some SLIFE arrive in the United States resenting being plucked from their home countries. She referred to these students as "the kids that come with their parents, are almost being forced here. Often they are pulled away from their friends, their

family, their home, their life, their country. They are plopped into this cold, dark place with all these white, crazy people.” Carlson lamented, “I try to imagine what these kids go through and I can't.” Carlson’s description of SLIFE’s challenges underscores the need to inform classroom teachers of these concerns as well.

Another way to help SLIFE adjust is providing mental health services. Unfortunately, mental health services are frequently limited to English and Spanish support at Washington. “A lot of my kids I think have PTSD and speak Somalian, but Washington High does not have any Somali mental health services,” noted Carlson. Training for all staff on symptoms of mental health needs is crucial and addresses the need of the whole child according to Carlson.

SLIFE face obstacles regarding education once they arrive in the United States and attend a Minnesota school. The student arrives with significant gaps due to a lack of understanding of the American school system, language differences, a variety of literacy levels, or different thinking processes. The teacher who meets these students is unequipped with information or knowledge on how to best meet the needs of these students academically and emotionally. Both teachers and students are frustrated. The student’s own cultural influences pose another challenge for Washington High teachers.

Cultural Influences

Cultural influences including norms, assimilation, familial roles and gender roles are significant challenges SLIFE face once they reach the United States according to Washington teachers. The teachers noticed students and families struggle to engage with and adapt to their new culture. They described confusion and missteps as a result of these differences. First teachers describe how all SLIFE face cultural obstacles because of norms, assimilation rates, and

family roles. The teachers then describe additional challenges women experience because of gender expectations.

Norms: Navigating Cultures

Cultural norm differences impact SLIFE entering a Minnesota school. Norms are the average or expected behaviors for a group of people. Washington teachers describe how SLIFE's age impacts cultural norms. Sometimes certain norms accepted in their home culture are absent or unfamiliar in the new culture. In some cases, normative behaviors are offensive to different groups of people. As SLIFE teenagers enter the American system, they are forced to navigate these norms and determine which, if any, they will assimilate.

The perspective of a person's age varies between cultures as noticed by many Washington teachers. Age is a factor in determining many things in American schools; such as what grade a student is enrolled in school, his/her level of respect in American culture, and how many years she will be eligible for free public education. The state of Minnesota funds a student's education through the age of twenty-one. While teenagers are considered kids in the United States, in many cultures, specifically many of the Minnesota SLIFE cultures, teenagers are considered adults. Carlson, Washington's ELL lead teacher, regularly observed students moving from an adult status back to a child status culturally when they arrive in the United States. For example, Frieria, from Ecuador, complained she has lost her freedom here. According to Frieria, she "can no longer just go out." Years before coming to the United States, Frieria did not attend school, instead supporting her elderly grandmother.

Adjusting to norm differences is challenging, and even more so when a person must make this shift during her teenage years. SLIFE teenagers not only experience hormonal changes occurring to their bodies, but they also face the difficulty of adjusting to a new culture.

Carlson observed American teen culture is really harsh. Like most teenagers, SLIFE compare themselves to other people. Like most Minnesota students, SLIFE engage in a lot of social media. Students are barraged with images and ideals of how to look and act. Carlson is concerned how SLIFE teenagers navigate this challenge.

As newcomers to the United States culture, SLIFE regularly appear lost or confused. Smith, the technology teacher, empathized with SLIFE explaining, “It would be very intimidating to understand cultural things happening all around you.” Smith noticed SLIFE often soak in the events going on around them, trying to make sense of behaviors and conversations. One thing she recognized is the discomfort SLIFE feel when they do not know what anybody is saying. “Not just verbal, but written things and signs and where stuff is.” Smith shook her head as she continued, “And not be able to ask for help and not have people understand you. And try to make friends.” SLIFE must navigate hallways, classrooms, schedules, conversations, and lessons, with little understanding of the language or innuendos that go with that language. Smith also noticed ELL and SLIFE may feel they do not belong because of cultural and racial biases. Frequently she encounters Washington’s mainstream students loudly commenting on how ELL students are dumb.

Various cultural mindsets influence decisions families make before arriving in the United States. Sometimes a decision can have a negative impact on a SLIFE. For example, when filling out documentation, many times parents must select an age to put for their child because birth certificates or records from their native countries do not exist. Teachers at Washington acknowledge it is often evident the student’s age recorded on the United States documentation is not accurate. Often these students do not match the physical or emotional development of their peers. Carlson explained it is not uncommon for Latino families to record their children as

younger than they actually are to get more public education. Alternatively, East African families' students frequently claim their children to be older than they actually are so the children can work when they arrive in the United States. These discrepancies can lead to difficulty relating to peers and low self-esteem in both instances.

Carlson told of an African student who was recently placed in ninth grade, but the teachers found out she was actually 13 years old. She should have been placed in seventh grade because ninth graders are usually 15 years old. As a SLIFE, she did not know how to hold a pencil, she did not know what to do with a book, and she had no idea what to do with an iPad or computer. As a student younger than her peers, she was behind emotionally, physically, and socially. Other students in the class learned her age and ostracized her because they viewed her as a baby. Even though she was much younger, she was asked to be mature and responsible like students two or more years older. Carlson remembered her appearing nervous and uncomfortable, throwing tantrums, and eating paper. Her difficulty in adjustment was compounded by decisions made before she came to the United States.

Once cultural norms are understood, students must decide if they will assimilate. Washington teachers notice SLIFE adjust and assimilate at various rates. Peers from similar cultures often find themselves adjusting at different rates, some embracing the new culture and some more resistant. Last year, Social Studies teacher Matthews, noticed a clash of cultural norms in her sheltered class where all students were ELL. Students who had been here for many years were befriending new arrivals. Many who lived in the United States for a while became "American," wearing their hijab looser or speaking up more. The newer students, more traditional, quiet and in small groups observed these changes. This created a conflict for one family. Matthews recalled two siblings in this class. They lived in Minnesota for three years

when the sister began to flirt with the boys. The brother was like “that’s very much against our culture.” He was very verbal about his opinion of the role of Muslim woman. His sister felt frustrated trying to be part of two cultures.

Understanding, navigating, and adapting to new cultural norms is confusing. SLIFE experience this hurdle as another of several obstacles. Losing adult status, navigating American teenage life, and varied rates of assimilation cause discomfort and confusion. These cultural norms make a difficult transition even more complicated for the SLIFE.

Family: Evolving Roles

In addition to the cultural norm conflicts students face in the educational setting with their peers, teachers recognized SLIFE parents also experienced obstacles in the home and school. The role and function of family members often changes from parents as the experts to their kids knowing more because the children learn English, American norms, and the educational system more quickly. Washington teachers noticed the function of family roles existing in their native country changed as family members had to adapt to the new environment. Parents rely on their children for support in a new culture and new language.

Parents also experience difficulty communicating with teachers and understanding the school system for multiple reasons. Language is often a significant barrier. Translators are occasionally available to interpret conversations, “but nuances are often missed,” explained Carlson, ELL department lead. Immigrant families are also unaware of the American education system and how to navigate it. According to Thompson, Washington’s technology teacher, most parents of SLIFE children cannot academically help their child due to their educational gaps. “While many parents are unable to support their students academically, all are grateful you are their teacher and you can help their child.”

Cultural experiences and expectations vary between ethnic groups and these differences frequently impact families. Klein, ELL teacher, spoke of a conversation she had with a father on the phone. He lamented how different things were here and how his children were acting differently because of the social expectations of American teenagers. He wanted resources to help him parent. Because of the language barrier he explained, "I can go into school, but I'm at their mercy. My children's mercy. They have to tell me what's going on." He felt less of a parent here because he could not communicate the way he had when they lived in their native country. There he instructed his children in language and culture. Here he was their student. Klein said this is so common in immigrant families when parents are forced to rely on their children for translation and information.

According to their teachers, cultural influences play a role in the adjustment to school and United States culture for SLIFE. SLIFE must learn cultural differences between their home country and the United States and resolve these differences to succeed in their education.

Gender: Inequities and Challenges

While all SLIFE struggle because of cultural differences, Washington teachers noticed women face additional challenges because of their gender. Assault, schooling restrictions because of gender, and expectations of marriage add to cultural obstacles. According to Washington teachers, trauma occurred due to the threat of assault during a woman's journey to the United States. Additionally, it was evident many women arrived with less education than the males of their home country. Teachers observed, even after arrival in the United States, some women continue to be denied educational opportunities by their families. Women also faced pressure by their families and culture to focus on marriage and parenting rather than high achievement in school.

Women are at risk of assault on their way to the United States. Many young women traveling through Latin America experienced rape or sex trafficking. These crimes intensified their personal trauma. Miller remembered one student who shared some of her story of sex trafficking. The school attempted to work with the family to address her emotional needs, but language translation difficulties and denial of the event impeded any progress. Ms. Miller remembered co-teaching her with a male science teacher. Throughout the course, the student never acknowledged the male teacher, a pattern noticed in all of her classes. She struggled to learn English and class content, and after three years of little success, she dropped out of school.

Women frequently have additional gaps in their educational understanding. Their schooling is often even more interrupted than their male siblings. Klein noticed basic numeracy skills lacking, especially in young women. Klein also recalled one 17-year-old student that really struggled with learning to read. She was just starting high school at 17 and taking care of younger siblings; two of the younger siblings were in ninth grade as was she. While she had hopes of other things, like graduating, the family's option for her was marriage. This SLIFE woman experienced multiple obstacles because of being her gender. Her family's future goals and expectations for her were different than she had for herself. Education was viewed as less of necessity because she would soon marry. She also was expected to spend her time caring for the younger siblings, instead of focusing on school. Finally, her grade placement put her below her peers, which impacted her self-esteem.

Another example of gender obstacles occurs when circumstances in native countries limits schooling. Peterson described a young woman who did not receive any schooling in the refugee camp because she was the primary caretaker of her disabled brother. When she arrived in the United States, she attended school for the first time. Because she was the young woman

who had to care for the family, she was considerably lower academically than her siblings. According to Peterson, the young woman's future seemed bleak.

The opportunity to get the extra help on class work or English is limited for some SLIFE women because of their gender. Klein remembered a young woman who really wanted to graduate. All the siblings came to the United States as SLIFE and were pre-literate. The brothers were allowed to play sports, go to the library, and stay after school to get help from teachers. One brother was in Klein's room a lot asking for help. The young woman and her younger sister could not stay for any reason. They were expected to go straight home and start cooking and taking care of the household and the younger siblings. The brothers ended up going to college; both sisters got married and did not go on to college. Inequities such as these are common as SLIFE women navigate a new culture with different perspectives on the role of women. Klein understood culturally, the brother was the hope of the family, because the family wanted him to get a good education, a good job, and support the family. Families often focus and support the male students, leaving SLIFE women unsupported in their educational pursuits.

One-year women missed out on an experience when Klein invited several students on a camping trip. The young women were adamant the school not even ask their father as they knew he would never allow it. Based on the women's pleas, Klein assumed somehow just asking for permission to go on the extra educational experience would get them into trouble. Examples like these show missed valuable opportunities in education simply because a student is a woman.

Washington teachers noticed despite some SLIFE women becoming academically successful and able to go to college, the families often intervened. Often Muslim young women may only attend college locally in order to live with their family. Some Somali families do not let their daughters leave the family until they get married. Carlson had one student accepted to a

university a few hours away, but her parents would not let her go, because they did not want her to live in the dorm. Some women find academic success, but because they lack family support to continue their education, they succumb to the family's culture of protecting and preparing them for marriage.

Although many SLIFE eventually drop out of school, leaving school before graduation is especially true for SLIFE women. Some young women drop out of school because their family has forced them to get married or the family needs money so the young woman must go to work. The United States educational culture puts women in direct conflict to family life in their home culture. Carlson heard many young women frustrated with school say, "I'm not going to college. I'm just going to get married and have children." And culturally that is exactly what they would be doing in their home country. Often SLIFE women feel frustrated with school and do not see how staying in school will help them in the future; so they decide to leave school and get married or find a job.

Marriage frequently transfers the authority of the family to the husband for many SLIFE. Some of these women will unlikely be permitted to pursue their dreams. Klein recollected a married student she taught whose husband made all the decisions, and the young woman did not seem to feel she had an opinion. Although a hard worker and successful, she remained in school until she was 18, and then dropped out as her husband ordered. Living in the United States culture and having access to many opportunities was overshadowed by her native culture.

The role of women limits the possibilities education brings for many women. A woman's role may be primarily wife and mother. Washington teachers explained SLIFE women struggle wanting more for themselves because they are living in a new culture that says women can do more. They also feel confused, due to family expectations. The hope for opportunity was

obvious in the interview with each SLIFE participant as each one explained her desire to go to college in the United States and later get married, unlike in her home country.

SLIFE in my study experienced educational and cultural obstacles. The educational obstacles differentiated SLIFE from their peers due to their lack of consistent or formal education. The cultural differences SLIFE women faced made the challenges seem overwhelming. These students had to navigate new norms which brought them confusion, low self-esteem, and family conflicts. Families of SLIFE also had to figure out new familial roles and communication. New ways of thinking and new ways of approaching the world challenged the women's past cultural norms. Women had to maneuver within the new culture because of, and despite, their gender. These obstacles were more apparent for women either because of lack of experiences in their homeland, the denial of new experiences, or family expectations of their gender role in the United States. A final obstacle teachers noticed was educational systemic expectations.

Systemic Expectations

Many SLIFE women entered the United States with little understanding of its educational system or the future possibilities it afforded them. In this section, the teachers describe the challenges SLIFE women faced to acquire the necessary knowledge to graduate as Minnesota expects. Finally, the teachers share their observations and thoughts on SLIFE's expectations of their future and the obstacles the women need to overcome to reach their goals.

Graduation from high school is difficult for SLIFE in the current education system. The state of Minnesota mandates all students receive specific courses during a specific amount of time in a push to provide equity to each student. The rush to fulfill these requirements frequently

leaves SLIFE lacking strong foundational skills. Their teachers also stated their frustrations in supporting students with large educational gaps.

Some teachers at Washington High School described the complication of rushing SLIFE to graduate in the mandated time. “The Four-Year Grad Plan just infuriates me as a language teacher,” protested Carlson. “I understand why the state implemented the Four-Year Grad Plan but I think that [it] was really exclusive of our SLIFE,” she complained. Carlson recognized the need to keep schools accountable and ensure all students have the opportunity to graduate on time. Yet the Four-Year Grad Plan seems to be designed for students coming into high school with a good general education, not SLIFE. Still, the legislation has not addressed this concern. “Equality is tricky. What's fair is not always equal. And what's equal is not always equality.” Carlson noted, “What’s equality for a kid who comes with great education versus a kid who doesn’t is not the same.” A student who has been through the American school system needs to build on a foundation of education in their final four years, further developing critical thinking processes. SLIFE need to build a foundation, learn a new language and culture while also developing higher level thinking skills. Sadly this system is not set up for the needs of a SLIFE.

The plan is also an unrealistic goal for schools serving SLIFE according to Carlson and Klein. When students do not graduate in four years, schools are looked on negatively. Graduation data is one measure used to evaluate the effectiveness of a school and its teachers. Washington teachers believed if it took five or six years to graduate a SLIFE instead of four, schools should celebrate. It would mean the student had met Minnesota’s specific academic standards: The SLIFE had learned academic level English vocabulary, learned to read and write in English, adapted new thinking processes, understood math and science concepts, and passed

all credit-bearing courses. Carlson asserted, “The students [would have come] in with very little or no prior education and graduated from high school in five years. That’s incredible!”

Schools, in a push to graduate students, also adjust expectations in many classes. Teachers are expected to prepare students to graduate. “If you haven’t ever had school before, how can you learn 12 years or 13 years of school in 4 years?” Smith worked as a support staff in Science courses. She witnessed classes with ELL students moving slower and completing more basic tasks. Teachers required English speaking students to write essays while SLIFE and ELL students filled out worksheets. Still, she knew ELL students got equal grades to their peers. Smith feels the diploma is less valid if students like the ones described receive it with lower standards. She cautioned, “Society has an idea what the diploma stands for, everyone should have the same expectations.”

Klein also described the moral dilemma of handing many SLIFE and some ELL students a diploma.

If you can hardly read the writing on the diploma or understand what it means, and there's not a lot of writing on diploma, or if you can't read those words and understand fully what they mean, it kind of feels like you shouldn't get it, right? Then what do we do to their lives if we don't give them the diploma?

Klein suggested the system has devalued the diploma. Klein, an experienced ESL teacher, often advised students to stay in school a fifth or sixth year. She told one student recently,

Nobody's going to know that you didn't graduate at 18. You don't have to tell anybody when you were 26. All they care is that you have a diploma. They don't care how long it took you to get it and they don't care what age you were when ... Nobody will ask. You just need to get it, but you'd be better off with another year of English.

Klein recognized this advice will impact the Minnesota Department of Education’s evaluation of Washington High School, but believed it is necessary for the student’s future. Teachers like

Klein are left in an awkward position to either work in the best interest of a student or help make the school look good.

Occasionally, students stay enrolled at Washington High School until the age of 21 in hopes of earning enough credit to graduate. Most students insist on graduating in four years despite teacher recommendation. Some feel desperate to find a job, feel frustrated at their slow progress, or are convinced they will succeed in a post-secondary program. Washington provides some training to assist marginalized students in finding potential post-secondary opportunities. Unfortunately, of the eight women interviewed, only Beydan knew of such a group. Most are unaware or unable to participate in these opportunities.

Expectations held by the Minnesota education system to graduate in four years, and SLIFE and teachers' expectation of what a diploma represents is another obstacle SLIFE women must overcome. Education provides opportunities to equal out some of the inequalities that have accompanied SLIFE women here because of where they grew up. Klein believed it is wrong to push them through a system not designed to meet their needs. She used the analogy, "So many of us were born near the third base and then there are other kids who aren't even in the stadium. We're almost home, right. They [just] started." Minnesota has welcomed refugees from around the world into the community for generations. Still the system is failing them. Carlson believes we need refugees to thrive and be contributing members of our society.

Life Beyond High School and Post-Secondary Education

No matter which path they choose, SLIFE women's future will be filled with challenges. All of the young women interviewed expressed an interest to go to college acknowledging it was "for a better life." Washington teachers described the readiness many SLIFE obtained before leaving high school. The teachers then shared examples of SLIFE women who are working to

reach their dream. Finally, teachers discussed the political and environmental realities of immigrants striving to meet post-secondary goals.

Many African refugees talk about wanting jobs in the medical fields. Klein wondered if these refugees want to be in the field because these are the only jobs they saw in the camps that also exist in the United States. Refugees continue to observe doctors and nurses in the United States, but they no longer see people delivering food aid, documenting immigration papers, or selling cooking oil. Klein wondered if SLIFE gravitate toward various career opportunities because of their limited exposure. She believes many students would benefit from repeated exposure to career possibilities in the United States.

Most SLIFE come to high school and expect to graduate in four years not fully understanding the courses they must take and the level of the language in which they must become proficient. According to Klein and Carlson, many students are unaware of the educational experiences of their peers who have been in the system their entire lives. ELL and SLIFE are often unaware of what they do not know in academics, especially compared to their peers. Teachers worry SLIFE will realize they lack these skills when it is too late. Many SLIFE feel they should be able to get through the four years, regardless of their lack of background. Some believe the system requires four years and the knowledge gained is irrelevant.

Many teachers predicted it must be quite a shock for SLIFE who go to college. First of all, college has less flexibility than Washington High School where teachers grade based on students' proficiency, teachers do not grade homework, and students can retake tests. The teachers predicted this inflexibility will cause frustration, especially for those from cultures used to negotiation. Another concern teachers discussed was how prepared students are for college level courses. Many SLIFE get D's, a passing grade in high school. However, this grade does

not indicate readiness for a student to proceed to a more difficult class. Students not ready to take these courses or not proficient in English are required to enroll in remedial and ESL classes in local community colleges and universities. These are non-credit courses, but students still must pay for them, and frequently these classes use up all of the students' financial aid. Klein says many students are shocked to learn they still need these courses. This reaction is another example of students not understanding what they do not know.

Peterson described a former SLIFE attending a local college, taking remedial courses. While he believed she is a competent person, in the United States "you need a piece of paper that proves that you are able to do certain things. She is going to have an incredibly hard time getting the paper." Peterson recognized fulfilling the requirements of college would be very difficult. This young woman could write basic sentences and paragraphs, but he knew she would need a lot of support to write a college level paper. Her conversational English was fair, but her ability to organize her time, follow through with commitments, and fill the gaps from her lack of schooling, will make it very difficult to complete college. He remembered at one point she wanted to return to Africa because she was so demoralized about school. The rigors of college make it even more difficult for SLIFE like her to achieve their dreams.

Yet for some, the dream might be achievable. Klein recalled another SLIFE woman who wanted to be a nurse. She was introduced to pediatric nursing and then midwifery in high school. She fell in love with the field. She went for four years at Washington and is now at the local community college where she is taking ESL courses. The student is living in the United States without a family and accountable only to herself. Klein hoped her independence and passion help in meeting the goal of becoming a midwife. As this student proves, it is possible for a SLIFE to move on academically.

Despite a high school diploma or a college degree, SLIFE are competing for the same entry-level jobs as students who grew up in the United States and learned and practiced the same skills for years. When students complain to Klein about excessive typing, she explains she is preparing them for a job because there is hardly a job whose tasks do not include typing or using the computer. She also knows these students lack the social capital for some careers because they do not have family or friends with whom to learn from or network. So, Klein, an ELL teacher, does her best to expose students to many possibilities by bringing in speakers, mentors, and taking field trips. She worries, once students accept the realities of their future goals, many SLIFE will leave school because they realize reaching their goal will take another five to ten years of learning. Klein continues to expose her students to these opportunities, believing providing the information is powerful.

Regardless of the challenges to obtain a degree, SLIFE women enter a work force in an unsettling political environment. It is unknown how a woman's status as an immigrant will impact her ability to find a job or feel secure in the United States due to deportation or anti-immigrant sentiments. Teachers also expressed a concern for Spanish speaking SLIFE young women. These women are often at an even greater disadvantage than other refugee young women because they do not have legal status. Many cross the borders because it is unsafe to remain in their home country, but once the immigrants arrive, they live in constant terror of being deported. These students risk their lives to get to the United States, and find the immigrants continue to live in poverty once they arrive. These women live on the margins, with little hope to improve their lives or future.

The future for SLIFE women continues to be filled with challenges. Practical realities of attaining many of the SLIFE women's dreams require more education and support to overcome the odds.

Summary

SLIFE women faced several obstacles in the United States. Participants described their educational and gender challenges once arriving at Washington High School. The women also shared their hopes and dreams for the future. Washington High School operates in the Minnesota education system with teachers well prepared to teach content, but teachers of SLIFE feel inadequately prepared to meet their needs. First, SLIFE face obstacles in education: their lack of knowledge, as well as their teachers' lack of information and understanding of how to meet their needs. The women also navigate cultural influences: understanding new cultural norms, family roles, and cultural roles for women. Finally, SLIFE women attempt to meet unreasonable expectations from society and themselves, with little comprehension of all that entails. No school system may be adequately prepared to meet the needs of SLIFE with the current level of educational funding. These challenges make it hard for SLIFE to transition to life in the United States. This makes it difficult for them to achieve their post-secondary dreams. Next I share opportunities to positively impact SLIFE's education once they arrive.

CHAPTER SIX: OPPORTUNITY

Despite overwhelming obstacles, SLIFE women arrive in Minnesota and strive to live productive lives. While information on effective strategies for teaching SLIFE is limited, Washington teachers are attempting to figure out useful approaches to educating these students. One common suggestion among classroom teachers in my study is to have a process to identify SLIFE for all teachers. Even without a general identification process, teachers have found through trial and error, some strategies that work. I describe strategies teachers at Washington High are using in their classrooms with some success, such as, employing common ELL methods, using collaboration among students, using translation help when possible, incorporating project-based learning, and defining goals. Next I describe ideas from the women and teachers regarding changes to the educational system to address specific needs of SLIFE (see Figure 4, p. 147). The possibility of incorporating these changes into the system is what drives each woman refugee and teacher to continue to move forward.

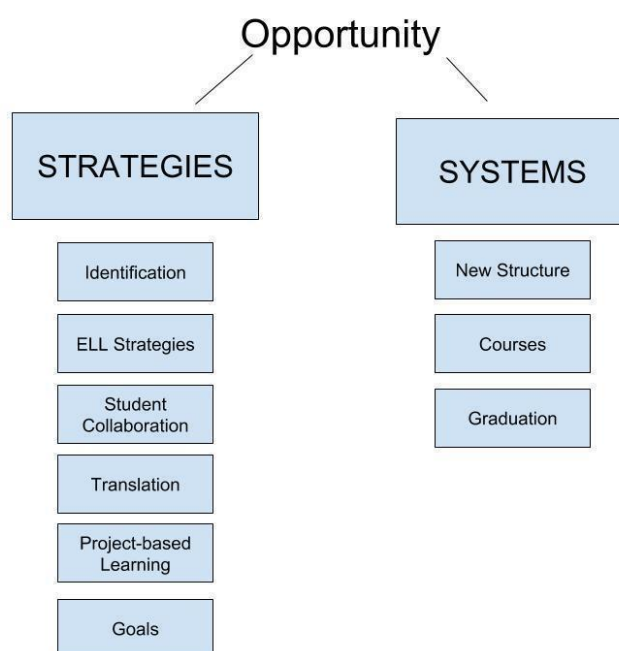


Figure 4: SLIFE opportunities

Educational Strategies

English Language Learning teachers have the education and experience of knowing effective strategies for ELL students. They attend conferences and read literature providing information on new ideas. “Nobody ever teaches you how to work with newcomers,” stated Carlson. College programs do not talk about levels of learner either.

Nobody definitely, definitely, nobody ever talked to me about a kid who wouldn't know how to hold a pencil. Or had never sat in a chair for six hours. Or, I don't know. Nobody teaches you how to do that. The only reason I know how to do that is because I learned from making a lot of mistakes. Or just trying to empathize with the kids.

Teaching students how to hold pencils using pencil holders designed for small children was one strategy Carlson learned to use with many newcomers. Unfortunately, ELL teachers at Washington High are stretched farther than most. They teach multiple classes and are expected also to provide support to mainstream teachers. Peterson, Carlson, Klein, and Miller would love to provide these resources to teachers, but are unable to do enough because of time constraints. All teachers mentioned learning through short workshops, colleagues, and through trial and error.

Identification

All teachers interviewed expressed a desire to have information regarding who was identified as a SLIFE. Nowhere did the school or district provide official documentation. Only three of the four ELL teachers could identify who might fit the category. During my interviews with mainstream teachers, I became aware that they were unfamiliar with the term SLIFE and only could guess at identifying students.

Miller, an ELL teacher, participated in the interview, not knowing which of her students fit the category of SLIFE. As we conversed, Miller became more and more ardent about the need to make this information available to all teachers. Miller believed identification of students

and setting up individual plans are most effective when working with students. Looking through her class list during the interview, she began commenting on students whose behaviors made sense if they were indeed SLIFE; one young woman needed more time finishing her assignments, another refused to do work. Miller began brainstorming ways to support these SLIFE. She decided she would set up meetings for periodic check-ins with students and assist in tracking credits.

ELL strategies

Language acquisition teachers use various strategies proven to be effective when working with ELL students. One high-yield strategy teachers use with ELL students is to provide visuals. Visuals and graphic organizers help ELL students organize the information they learn in a visual way. Graphic organizers are visual displays that organize thoughts and ideas. Learning from co-teaching with Peterson last year, Matthews incorporates a lot of visuals in her class. During all note-taking sessions in the History class, Matthews provides students with these organizers to identify relationships, concepts, and facts. Thompson incorporated a word wall, an intentional display of key vocabulary words, in the music class. All around the room, he hung up words in big, colorful letters. Students draw pictures underneath to describe the words and they write translations of the words in many languages. He noticed students frequently refer to the words throughout class.

Other highly effective strategies used by some teachers at Washington are tiering and differentiation. Both proactively provide supports at different levels for students. Thompson began differentiating his music worksheet assignments by creating three versions; one is higher level, one is mid-level with some pictures and less wordy than the first sheet, and the final sheet

consists of almost all pictures with smiley faces or frowns. This adjustment provides a way for all of his students to show their learning.

Matthews also differentiates materials and activities for students who need additional supports in History class. She provides assessments at different tiered levels to ensure all of her students have the information they need to succeed. One assessment may have a graphic organizer to structure an essay or a word bank for key vocabulary words, while another student's assessment does not provide these types of supports. She also provides time afterschool to reteach lessons for those who need it in smaller groups where she can go more slowly.

"The entire school needs to figure out how to tier every classroom." Miller recalled a student in Science who was responsible for giving a presentation with the same criteria as every student in the class, even though he was new to the country. Every student in the class received the same, high-level articles. The SLIFE had not yet learned how read, but he was still expected to complete the task. Miller knew if the class were tiered, the group at his level would be supported and have resources where the content was accessible.

Another strategy frequently used by some teachers consists of sentence frames or sentence starters. Sentence starters are short phrases at the start of a sentence in which the student fills in the blank or completes the thought. Smith provides sentence starters to ELL students for many technology assignments. Students use these starters to create content for writing projects and PowerPoint presentations where students learn to use the technology.

Peterson acknowledged he is still seeking high impact strategies for his SLIFE. Some strategies that work with ELL students may not be as effective with SLIFE. One strategy he uses for ELL students to teach key concepts and vocabulary is through reading and interacting with text. His SLIFE are usually unable to read so they practice listening and following along in the

book. Peterson admitted this is not very successful because the students usually do not understand the text. Another approach is to partner students, but this is difficult, too, because of the limited background information he has on each student.

Peterson also uses the KWL graphic organizer and strategy to build on students' background knowledge of a topic. "K" stands for "Know" where students list everything they know about the topic to be learned. "W" stands for "want" where students write ideas of things they want to learn about the topic. "L" stands for "learned" and students list new knowledge they gain from learning about the topic. Peterson used this strategy recently on a lesson regarding the United States government. Peterson learned from this pre-teaching that most everyone knew there was a president and vice president but the students needed to learn the rest. Reflecting on this lesson and the strategies, he wondered if it was beneficial to his SLIFE. Using a KWL seemed useless if SLIFE have limited background knowledge.

Student Collaboration

Intentionally partnering students to work together provides positive outcomes. Matthew, Peterson, Scott, Smith, and Thompson all referred to strategically pairing students with peers to assist with translation and clarification in the students' first language. Unfortunately in some classes, if a critical mass of students does not understand what is happening, the teacher does not have the ability to effectively match up students. Last year Peterson built a system around partner work, but this year he was unable to replicate this structure because every student in his class had limited language skills. Smith often partnered new students with other students who could help them understand class directions and content. She recognized she could not stop her instruction to focus on the new student, especially if she and the student could not communicate with each other.

Thompson also uses partner work. He found students are more motivated to create something with a friend rather than alone. He began allowing his SLIFE and ELL students to work on everything, including assessments, together. He was reluctant at first, but then he realized if the student has to huddle together to get the solution “that is my assessment right there.”

Translation

ELL and SLIFE learners struggle to understand classroom instruction not in their language. Students describe how helpful it is to have someone available to translate and support them. Beydan remembered the assistance her family received when they landed in the United States. Social workers showed the family the location of the Somali mall, where to buy food, and other necessities. Angelica was thankful for a staff member who helped her by conversing in Spanish when she first arrived at Washington High. When Cawo arrived at Washington, she felt sad. She did not know any students and she felt lonely. When she began to speak to friends who also spoke her language she began to feel more comfortable. “The people are kind.” Some of her teachers even knew Oromo. Today she knows so many people and she enjoys school. “It is my school,” Cawo smiled.

Guadalupe chose to leave a Minnesota suburban school after one week because no one there spoke Spanish. She decided to attend Washington where she heard other students were also learning English. When she arrived at Washington, she had two classes where others spoke Spanish as well as some of her teachers. Occasionally she would ask a question in Spanish in her classes, but today she never needs to talk in Spanish to her teachers.

Having students and teachers at school speak and translate home languages can also have a negative effect. Klein teaches at Washington, but she recently spent a couple of years at

Jefferson, a school designed to serve an all immigrant high school population. While students are making progress at Washington because they feel supported and many staff speak in students' first language, students are struggling with reading, writing, and math at both schools. One difference at Jefferson is students are not hearing incidental English. Students rarely hear English conversations and Klein thinks that is cause for concern.

They're just not over hearing it ever in class. They don't hear it in the lunch line, they don't hear it in class, because everyone is speaking to their friend either in Spanish, or in Somali, or in Oromo, or whatever language. The kids who made the greatest gains there that I saw were kids who were singletons, so a Vietnamese speaker who had no other Vietnamese speaker so she had to speak in English to any of the other kids. She couldn't speak in her native language to any of the kids.

Of course, all the students are taught English so they are all learning it, but SLIFE are not having conversations with any native speakers. Based on her experience, Klein suggested students attend a comprehensive school like Washington. "The incidental contact, I think, you can't measure it. I'm not sure how much that counts but I'm sure it counts for something."

Project-based Learning

Project-based learning occurs when instruction focuses on real-world application of topics. This is done through exploring and solving problems through interactive learning, integrating all content areas. Some Washington teachers described their approach to SLIFE using project-based techniques.

When newcomers arrive at Washington High School, many take a non-credit course, Math Concepts. This class is for one year and prepares students for Intermediate Algebra. Initially, this class tried to teach eight years of math into one year, designed around what skills students did not know, and teaching those skills. Scott remembered the first couple years left students feeling frustrated. It became evident that the methods used were not working and teachers needed to reexamine their approach.

Scott's experience as a language learner in Guatemala guided her ideas in teaching math to newcomers. She realized the class was not productive because it was designed from a deficiency model. This mind shift changed the focus from skills to mathematical practices. It became clear students needed an overall toolkit; holding students back because they could not add two numbers together did not work. Like herself in Guatemala, Scott knew the students would have to understand how to function in the community for their well-being and the well-being of others. Scott designed a project-based classroom, one centered on engaging in real life problems in an effort to acquire a deeper knowledge.

Scott recognized students are coming to her classroom with little mathematical knowledge; she provides opportunities to learn how to talk about mathematics.

[I want] to increase the communication about the mathematics, so that when you go to the next course that you're able to articulate what you know, and what you don't know, and then maybe have a strategy to get there.

Most have not had the opportunity to play with math, so she gives them opportunities to practice using different strategies instead of just handing them a calculator. Guadalupe is in Math Concepts. She smiled as she talked about the class.

I have two buckets and I have things in the buckets, how many it is and this and that. And use one problem in the tablet for play and you know...it's a play game but it's about math so it was fun, I like it.

Scott is excited about the possibility of more project-based learning. Often she communicates with the Science Concepts teacher on strategies to teach during math to help students be more successful in science. For example, students practiced skip-counting on thermometers in math so they could apply it to the graduated cylinders they were to use for measuring in science.

Scott is thrilled to observe students' confidence improve. One student declared early on she was not going to talk in class. Now, she takes a very active role in talking and sharing her thinking. Scott is really amazed and excited to see how this student continues to grow. Many of Scott's math concept students finger count or skip count, something typical in first, second, and third grade. This class provides experiences for them to use more sophisticated strategies before entering Intermediate Algebra. She recognized students most likely will not be proficient in Intermediate Algebra, but her goal is the students can at least think back to "Okay, that one time in Math Concepts, we drew number lines, "or "We did this thing to figure out a problem. Maybe I can use this strategy here."

"It is necessary to push students beyond Math Concepts," said Scott. Many mainstream students score just as low as ELL students in math skills. Scott noted, "Do we stop kids who have been in the United States for eight years and say, 'Oh no, you can't go to Intermediate Algebra because you don't know how to multiply?'" Instead, we give the student the tools. Since the ELL students have not had the opportunity to learn, it would not be equitable to hold ELL students back, delaying their graduation.

Goals

Identifying success for each student continues to evolve. Teachers reflected throughout the interviews on their success working with current SLIFE. While most feel frustrated at their limit of time and knowledge, some focused on areas in which they have noticed success. Peterson struggled with acknowledging he is not meeting SLIFE's needs. Mostly he watches their behavior and interacts to build positive relationships. He wants students to feel comfortable.

I have this plan that I have to try to teach you things that are going to be useful to you in social studies – I’m going to try to do that – but I’m also going to try to make you feel good about being in the room.

Thompson’s goal for the class is to feel welcomed and comfortable. He wants school to be a place to explore, to try and learn things in a fun way.

So hopefully the hands on the drumming, the group compositions, hopefully the interesting technology, it’s fun and you can play in there and it’s safe and fun. That said, when you’re playing and playing in music, and in the elements, I also want you...making decisions about what you’re doing.

Washington teachers employ various strategies to meet the needs of all their students.

“Nobody taught you any of this. You kind of learn as you go,” observed Thompson. Employing these strategies is an effort to meet SLIFE’s needs. Some women refugees recognized the efforts by teachers to help them feel welcomed. Dhudi recalled, “Even when I missed a day of school, [teacher] noticed and asked how he could help.” Despite designing classrooms to welcome and meet the needs of SLIFE, the educational system’s flaws limit SLIFE’s success.

Restructuring Educational Systems

Teachers believe education can make an impact on students despite so many obstacles. Currently the educational system does not meet most SLIFE’s needs. Peterson believed we must find a way to identify what kind of knowledge students begin with. “We are putting them in the most absurd situation. Setting aside the culture piece, setting aside the English piece, the school thing - and putting them in a high school context, this stuff is complicated.” He admitted to having a hard time figuring out how to make the information fit together for all his students. Two years into SLIFE’s schooling many “become totally disenfranchised, totally disconnected, and then it’s too late.” He argued educators needed to catch them immediately by providing schooling that works. In the next section, teachers and students make recommendations of systematic adjustments needed to make schooling work for SLIFE.

New Structure

The impact of restructuring the Minnesota education system might result in profound changes for SLIFE women. Some teachers like Carlson, Peterson, Smith, and Miller recommended a newcomer setting, possibly a designated center, for students to experience intensive orientation and learn basic skills. Miller imagined the first day to be “basic training day.” Students would get a backpack full of supplies and teachers would teach basic information on how to use it. Smith suggested this year long center would provide instruction on basic computer skills, English, school routines, and schedules. This move might help students be more confident and prepared for learning.

Peterson also favored a yearlong academic focus after clearly identifying the needs of each student. Today, he works with students who did not connect to education in the right time in the right way. Peterson does not blame the student. “This has got nothing to do with them.” Still, he has a good relationship with most of those students but that can only go so far. The “I’m not a student... This isn’t for me” attitude is “too deep now and so it’s super hard.”

Carlson wished there was a separate location for students to go before SLIFE came into the high school environment. “It just, it takes them so long to get accustomed and it's not fair to them. I hate seeing them struggle so much.” Carlson believed if all newcomers had just six weeks of English, basic math skills, and some vocabulary, they could then enter high school with more confidence. “When a kid comes into a high school environment, they should be able to at least ask any teacher in the building if they can go to the bathroom.”

Carlson extends her thoughts on a newcomer center by including the entire family in the education. She described a job early in her career, helping students after school with homework. The first hour the students worked on homework, and the second hour they planned English

classes to teach parents on Saturdays. She would like the newcomer center to give parents the same cultural education opportunities as their kids.

Courses

Changing and adding courses may also positively impact SLIFE learners. Carlson would also like to see some courses rearranged. Currently, newcomers take Physical Science, which is abstract and math heavy, the first year. Carlson recommended switching this with Biology which is visual, hands on, and has a lot of basic vocabulary. Scott also would like to see the one-size-fits-all approach modified. Instead of requiring seven periods a day with one period of math, one period of reading, and so on, she proposes newcomer students have their own schedule. Providing a schedule for a SLIFE to take two hours of math, two hours of English, and an hour of Science would allow for more time to incorporate hands-on learning. Both Miller and Scott also believed an opportunity to learn trades would be valuable, especially since their educational time is so shortened.

“We don't leverage their bilingualism.” Scott was passionate about celebrating students’ bilingualism. Bilingualism is one asset ESL and SLIFE bring to the table. This approach focuses on students’ assets. She hoped schools can eventually provide content courses in several languages including Spanish, Oromo, and Somali. This would help students fluidly move between two languages – their own and English.

Graduation

The current Four-Year Grad plan imposed by Minnesota legislation creates a variety of frustrations. Multiple teachers would like to see Minnesota’s graduate rates exclude SLIFE. Teachers felt strongly this data does not reflect the journey the students have been on nor how much growth they have made. Another idea proposed by Klein creates a two-tiered graduation

system. This provides diplomas to SLIFE at 21 years old, celebrating incredible gains, yet acknowledging SLIFE have not had the same level of schooling. Klein also preferred certain courses like Physics or Chemistry be waived for SLIFE. She is frustrated that these courses often prevent SLIFE from graduating which is not only hurting SLIFE but it is also harmful to society.

Summary

Chapter six focused on opportunities created by the educational system to provide hope for SLIFE women. This chapter was divided into two sections: (1) suggestions of effective strategies from the teachers and students and (2) systemic adjustments to better meet the needs of SLIFE. The teachers suggested how to improve educational strategies and systems to better meet the needs of SLIFE. The next chapter offers an analysis of my study.

CHAPTER SEVEN: ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I use Kim's cross-cultural theory of adaptation (1998, 2001, 2015) and Freire's humanizing pedagogy (2000, 2012) to analyze the experiences of eight SLIFE women as they move from one culture to another, as well as the experiences of the teachers who supported them. First, I briefly review the main ideas of Kim's adaptation theory, including the transition from stress to adaptation, and to renewal. I describe the initial conditions contributing to stress for immigrants entering the United States. Next, I analyze the participants as they adjusted to a new culture. Kim's final stage of transition, adaptation, includes four elements. I show how these four elements allow me to interpret the experiences of SLIFE women. Finally, I review the five pillars of Freire's human pedagogy theory and apply this theory to the educational needs and experiences of SLIFE women. The ideas and recommendations of SLIFE women and teachers regarding their educational needs expose the gaps in these students' educational knowledge, and the potential cognitive, affective and behavioral strategies teachers might use to support the development of SLIFE women. This combination of theories shows the adaptation and learning of SLIFE women in the United States.

Kim's Cross-Cultural Theory of Adaptation

Intercultural identity is defined as an individual's growth beyond her own culture and her adaptation of a new culture (Kim 2001, 2015). Kim identifies the process of that adaptation as a three-step process: stress, adaptation, and renewal. The first step, stress, comes from the conditions an immigrant initially faces when transitioning into a new environment. These conditions include: commonalities and differences between the home and new culture, the dependence on the host culture, and the engagement level of the host environment to the immigrant. The first condition of stress is the disparity between the host and home culture.

Identification of these differences indicates the level of adaptation an immigrant must make. A second condition of stress is the level of dependence an immigrant has on the host country. The greater the need an immigrant has in integrating into the new environment, the more quickly she will adapt. Finally, the level of investment members of the host culture make in each immigrant's adaptation provides some indication of the ease or struggle she will have. These factors impact each immigrant as she transitions at her own pace to a new culture.

The next step to Kim's (2001) theory is adaptation. Many variables impact the ease and speed in which an immigrant adapts to her new culture. During the process of adaptation, an immigrant's experiences with the following elements also contribute to the ease of transition: 1) communication, 2) environment, 3) predisposition, and 4) intercultural change. Communication is key to adapt to the new culture. Proficiency in the host language is necessary to facilitate conversation, verbal and non-verbal. Mass communication and interpersonal communication assist in helping the immigrant understand the language, history, and norms of the new culture (Kim, 2001). An immigrant must also have access to communication within the host country and a willingness to adapt to it. The second element contributing to adaptation in Kim's theory relates to the environment the immigrant enters and her eagerness to adapt. The immigrant must be receptive to the host culture, with access and openness to the native people in her new country, and have the opportunity to integrate into the new culture. The immigrant's predisposition is the third element impacting adaptation. Her physical, emotional, and mental health can affect the transition process positively or negatively. The attitude of the immigrant, such as optimism, strength, and openness can also play a role. Finally, the intercultural change itself, both the ease of the transition and the final outcome, happiness, can impact the immigrant's adaptation.

The final stage in Kim's adaptation theory is renewal. Immigrants become cross-cultural after accumulating extensive experiences across cultural boundaries. She knows how to adapt to new cultural experiences, transforming her identity from mono-cultural to intercultural or bicultural. She understands herself in multiple cultural identities. According to Kim (2015), "This three-part theoretical claim is made with the practical aim of projecting a path of creatively and constructively engaging oneself in the world of intensifying interface of differing, and often divergent, cultural traditions" (p. 4).

The SLIFE participants entered the United States and experienced significant stress, the first of three stages in Kim's model. I analyze the experiences of the women once they entered the United States to determine their progress toward adaptation.

Stress: Commonalities, Dependence, and Engagement

Prior to arriving in the United States, all eight SLIFE women experienced forms of trauma. Some of the trauma resulted from poverty, food insecurity, and harsh living environments. Others witnessed or experienced violence and separation from loved ones. Participants experienced significant stress from trauma in their native countries and during their journeys. The SLIFE women also experienced different forms of stress when they arrived in the United States.

While the SLIFE women found food and a place to live, the transition to a strange culture and their lack of language skills represented an unanticipated hurdle to making a successful transition. Another stress inducer involved homesickness and loss of contact with family members and a sense of place. Individuals form and enact their identities in cultural and social settings, and living within a familiar culture provides comfort, a sense of identity, and a stable and predictable environment. While the United States meant secure lodging, food security, and

safety to the immigrants, it also meant they encountered unfamiliar technology, food, and structures. Routine activities necessary in the refugee camp were no longer needed and SLIFE women, at first, were at a loss to fill their time. Families relied on unfamiliar transportation to carry them to foreign and strange locations. Because SLIFE women lacked a sense of place, they experienced elements similar to those experienced on their journey to the United States. Feeling loss and being “lost” added considerable stress to the lives of SLIFE women.

Attending school also created stress for SLIFE women because of the vast differences in the cultural norms between their home country and their new day-to-day reality. The SLIFE women described several discrepancies and few similarities between schooling in their home country and in the United States. The women identified language as the biggest obstacle to overcome. Others, excited to attend school, soon realized they had not yet learned how to read and do basic math computation, putting the SLIFE significantly behind their peers. Beyond academic learning, SLIFE women faced stress as they navigated school processes such as grades, courses, and expectations. They were no longer able to use negotiation techniques or rely on their collectivist culture to help them with academics. SLIFE women felt stress as they recognized how far behind they were compared to their American peers.

Another difference SLIFE women faced when they entered the United States involved the role of women in this new culture. The new culture focused on women completing their education and beginning a career instead of rushing into marriage and motherhood. Embracing the possibilities of their future caused stress because the SLIFE women lacked the resources or role models to understand the American postsecondary and career system. SLIFE women in the United States, experienced a cultural shift from their homeland. SLIFE woman entered the United States with many gaps to fill and struggled to adapt to a new culture and language.

These profound differences between two cultures created conditions requiring SLIFE women to navigate the transition to a new environment. The resistance to change, and an attempt to maintain their home culture, conflicted with the desire to conform to the new setting creating confusion and anxiety (Kim, 2015). This stress caused the women to experience “crises.” Some SLIFE women used the crisis to become isolated and avoid the changes, finding comfort in familiar cultural groups; others used the stress to propel them into new cultures.

Another condition Kim (2001) described in the cross-cultural adaptation theory involved the level of dependence on the host environment. If the immigrant thrives in the host country without interaction or dependence on the new culture, adaptation will occur more slowly. All eight SLIFE women maintained their culture because of their limited interaction with those outside their cultural group due to their home and school environments.

SLIFE women lived with family in homes and communities allowing them to function in their home culture while living in the United States. This allowed the women to avoid the stress of adaptation. Attending Washington High School provided limited opportunities for the participants to connect with native English speakers. Due to the large population of ELL students at Washington, participants connected with others with similar native languages and cultures. This lack of interaction between the two cultures limited the dependence of SLIFE on their American peers. Teachers provided opportunities for interaction, but they occurred infrequently. SLIFE integrated in a school where other students with similar cultures and languages provided needed supports delaying the urgency to adapt to a new culture.

A third condition Kim (2001) referred to is the level at which the host supports and engages with immigrants. The host’s readiness to provide necessary supports for SLIFE could make the transition smoother. According to my study’s findings, Minnesota teachers, the

educational system, and schools were not prepared to support the needs of SLIFE women. This lack of preparation established an environment making adaptation difficult for the SLIFE participants.

Washington High School teachers are dedicated educators and possess the desire to meet the needs of all their students. Despite this urgency, all eight teachers said they felt overwhelmed and frustrated because they lacked preparation, training, and resources to meet the needs of SLIFE. The educational system is also not prepared to meet the needs of SLIFE, a condition necessary if the SLIFE women are expected to successfully adapt. For example, State legal requirements to graduate in four years often force SLIFE to take courses they are not prepared for, sending them through a system where they may not be getting all their educational needs met. SLIFE enter a high school needing to learn English and to fill in several significant academic gaps. Because of these circumstances, many use the first two years taking non-credit bearing courses, learning English and basic academic skills, but not accumulating credits toward graduation. Since they only have four years to graduate, the SLIFE enroll in mainstream, high school level courses, participating in the same courses taken by traditional students with strong academic preparation. Entering the school system as a SLIFE means they face insurmountable odds as they strive to learn, to prepare for their future, and to graduate within a four-year time period.

Washington High also lacks resources to support SLIFE emotionally and mentally. Washington provides some counseling services, but none are available in Somali, a language predominant to many SLIFE. Teachers lack training to identify mental health needs of students, something essential when working with SLIFE. Teachers and students voiced frustration, and

students who felt unsupported frequently dropped out of school. The educational system did not allow SLIFE to make successful transitions.

Adaptation: Communication, Environment, Predisposition, and Intercultural Change

SLIFE women arrived in the United States with conditions impacting their adaptation (Kim, 2001). Kim identified four elements contributing to the ease of adaptation. Kim described the first element as communication between the immigrant and host country individuals. The ability to communicate in the new country enables immigrants to understand the new setting and learn about their new environment more quickly. SLIFE women arrived in the United States lacking proficiency in English, making it difficult to communicate. As high school students they enrolled in English courses designed to help them overcome the language barrier, but the process of learning the language can take several years.

A second element Kim identified as helpful in the adaptation process is the environment of the host country and the willingness of the immigrant to adapt. SLIFE women arrived in the United States to a host unprepared to meet their needs. The participants in this study indicated an eagerness to learn about their new home. Each one described how she envisioned her future as a Minnesotan. However, none of the participants had relationships with anyone outside of her culture or language groups, except for her teachers. Some of the women expressed shyness and fear. While the participants seemed eager to learn and integrate in their new culture, their lack of interaction prevented them from adapting smoothly.

The third element affecting adaptation according to Kim is the predisposition of the immigrant. SLIFE women arrived in the United States after instances of extreme trauma. SLIFE women experienced instances of trauma in their home country, along their journeys, and some

continued to face additional trauma. These experiences affected SLIFE women as they tried to adapt in their new culture.

Before coming to the United States, each woman experienced various forms of poverty, separation, and violence. Effects of malnutrition continued as they arrived in the United States. One indicator was that all four African women had missing or rotten teeth.

Due to experiencing or witnessing extreme violence, many of the women experienced trauma disorders. All women experienced loneliness for the home they once knew, where they felt secure. Their journey across borders and to their new homes was often dangerous and frightening. Each woman faced immigration procedures, uncertain if they would be able to stay in the country they had risked so much to enter. Once the women made it to Washington High School, they continued to face trauma. Getting lost, not speaking English, and doing school differently than their home country created fear in the women on their first days of school. Because of the consistent and extreme levels of trauma, the women carried these stresses with them, causing emotional anxiety and mental disorders. All the women faced physical, emotional, or mental issues as part of their adjustment to the new culture. The hardships experienced throughout her childhood also added to their stress.

Despite so many obstacles, SLIFE women shared reasons to have hope and remain strong. All eight women voiced hope for their futures and urged other immigrant women to get an education. Each insisted they planned to graduate, suggesting a diploma would provide opportunities for their future. Some women relied on religious beliefs to sustain them. Amidst their past and present traumas, SLIFE women remained hopeful as they navigated life's difficulties in their new home.

The final element impacting adaptation to a new culture involves the level of happiness and success experienced by immigrants (Kim, 2001). SLIFE women who made the adjustment to the United States continued to adapt more easily. Each SLIFE woman smiled as she expressed gratitude and happiness for their new lives in the United States. They explained life felt safer and more secure. Those who are less successful or unhappy about their new home take longer in adjusting to their new culture.

Four of the SLIFE women, although happy to live in the United States, longed for their home country. Angelina, Frieria, Guadalupe, and Dhudi missed the memories and the people they left behind. Each recognized it was not possible to return now, but they hoped to return one day. The other four SLIFE participants missed their home country, but considered the United States as their new home. According to Kim (1988), those accepting their new location as home will have the smoother time adapting to it.

The communication, environment, predisposition and intercultural change experiences of each of the SLIFE women impacted their ability to adapt to a new culture. These four elements identified by Kim (2001), showed SLIFE women struggled to adapt to their new culture: language differences made communication challenging; SLIFE women reluctantly integrated in mainstream society, finding security in familiar cultural groups; SLIFE women experienced tremendous levels of trauma creating physical, mental, and emotional barriers made adaptation difficult. Despite these odds, SLIFE women expressed optimism and hope for their future. Kim's theory of cross-cultural adaptation provides a context for SLIFE women's experience integrating into their new culture. Freire's humanizing pedagogy addresses how educators and educational systems might affect a difficult transition.

Freire's Humanizing Pedagogy

SLIFE come to the United States and face a dominant culture. They enter the education system as an oppressed minority, trying to penetrate the dominant group to find their own American dream. While education is the great equalizer, it is currently structured to keep the oppressor in power and make the oppressed its subjects. Freire (2000, 2001) describes humanization as the process oppressed people use to become freer and affirm their identities. Humanizing pedagogy uses education to equip the oppressed to pursue their right to be human. Freire gives essential components in this pedagogy. The ultimate goal of humanizing pedagogy is to provide freedom to the oppressed. Praxis, the combination of reflection and action, is the key to this freedom. According to Freire (2000, 2001), this is accomplished through dialogue. Freire argues the student must discuss conflicting perspectives, the dialectic, to help the oppressed understand their conditions. This critical consciousness enables the oppressed to understand the social and political contradictions of her life and act. This concrete action leads to freedom.

Raised in the United States as an immigrant, Salazar (2013) experienced oppression, feeling inferior amongst her peers. As contemporary theorist, Salazar examined Freire's conception of humanizing pedagogy. Salazar's (2013) work it is noted that "some critics have charged that Paulo Freire offers an elusive portrayal of humanizing pedagogy that is detached from the context of actual classrooms" (p.128). Salazar responds to these criticisms by taking Freire's technical works and creating five practical elements. Salazar (2013) identified five pillars of Freire's theory to ensure transformation for the oppressed; 1) Development of the whole person, 2) Uncovering oppression, 3) Dialogue and problem-posing learning, 4) Critical reflection and action, and 5) Student owned pedagogy. Next, I explain the concepts of each

pillar, providing analysis of how applying Freire's humanizing pedagogy in an educational setting would assist SLIFE women to succeed.

Develop the Whole Person

The first pillar of Freire's pedagogy is the importance of meeting the needs of the whole person. Relationships must develop between student and teacher. The participants shared how some Washington teachers were helpful and kind. The accessibility of the teachers provided opportunities to develop relationships with students to better know how to serve them. "Freire encourages educators to listen to their students and build on their knowledge and experiences to engage in contextualized, dynamic, and personalized educational approaches that further the goals of humanization and social transformation" (Salazar, 2013, p. 127).

SLIFE spend the majority of their school day with ELL teachers. It was evident in the research that these teachers were more knowledgeable about SLIFE women's background, needs, and interests than subject matter teachers. Developing relationships with SLIFE was difficult for most other teachers because of language barriers and the large number of students they serve. During the interviews with most of the Washington teachers, I found they were unaware of the academic background or the stories of some of their own students. Without opportunities to understand students' stories, needs, and strengths, teachers are unable to tailor instruction, develop compassion, or create lessons relevant to all their students' cultures.

According to Freire, students of color are even more invisible. It is essential Washington teachers make an intentional effort to seek out information from their oppressed SLIFE. Teachers in the study felt helpless without identification of who qualifies as SLIFE. Burke et al. (2008) stated, "When life experiences are ignored dismissed or devalued, students infer that their personal perspectives and worldviews are nonessential to their learning experiences" (p. 66). To

contradict the current system of educating SLIFE, Freire's humanizing pedagogy would require teachers to avoid stripping students of their cultural, linguistic, and familial aspects that make them unique. SLIFE should be given opportunities to be understood, so all their needs can be met. First, all participants must understand the roles they play in SLIFE women's oppression.

Uncover the Oppression

A second pillar of Freire's humanizing pedagogy is to uncover oppression. This begins with the educators and system understanding their own roles as oppressors in the American education system. Salazar (2013) suggested that humanizing teachers "interrogate their own histories and roles in oppression before engaging in the co-liberation of others" (p. 135). Historically, educational systems perpetuate replacement of culture and identity to assimilate in the new culture. This approach denies the humanity and value of others. Educators often treat students as objects, in effect, dehumanizing them. Freire (2000) refers to this as the banking method where information is deposited into their heads. Consequently, dehumanization reduces students to the "status of sub humans who need to be rescued from their 'savage' selves" (Bartolomé, 1994, p. 176).

Rather than make SLIFE fit into a system, the system must fit for the student. Currently, the educational system perpetuates continued injustice, as it requires all students to fulfill equal graduation requirements. All students are expected to master the same topics under the same conditions as their peers who have attended schools for twelve years. Washington teachers feel trapped by the system to push SLIFE through the system to meet legal requirements. Instead, humanizing pedagogy addresses the specific needs of each student to best prepare her for post-secondary success.

In addition to teachers and educational systems discovering the way they oppress SLIFE, the students themselves need to be made aware of their own oppression.

Self-depreciation is a characteristic of the oppressed, which originates from the internalization of the opinion the oppressors hold of them. So often do they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything -- that they are sick, lazy, and unproductive -- that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness. (Freire, 1996, p.45)

Frequently, SLIFE focused on what they are not yet able to do. They recognized their lack of proficiency in English, falling far below their peers in US academics. They also needed to learn a new culture. Freire's (2001) humanizing pedagogy illuminates the deficit mindset of the oppressed and recommends providing critical discussion and problem solving to provide SLIFE women the opportunity to learn about and use their strengths.

Transformative Dialogue and Problem-Based Learning

Once teachers become aware of their students' strengths and needs and they recognize the occurrence of oppressive behaviors, teachers may find solutions in Freire's (2000) strategies. Freire suggested two key concepts of instruction: dialogue and problem-based learning. Engaging in transformative dialogue considers both the teacher and students as learners. Teachers must be aware of their role in upholding inequitable educational structures, powers, and privilege while anticipating critical conversations. These conversations provide opportunities to experience multiple perspectives. The consciousness of teachers affects their ability to challenge unrecognized oppressive behaviors experienced by SLIFE women. Challenging the oppression of students both values and legitimizes students' experiences. When SLIFE learn to challenge systems and authorities maintaining oppression, students develop critical consciousness, too.

Problem-posing education provides real life problems affecting students' lives and gives students an opportunity to solve their problems (Freire, 2000). The teacher becomes less of an

instructor and more of a participant and facilitator in the discoveries. Problem-posing makes learning relevant, applicable, student-driven, and hands-on. Engaging in problem solving projects acknowledges and uses students' strengths, language and background knowledge to create humanizing pedagogy. Neither SLIFE nor teachers referred to engaging in problem solving with one exception. Scott intentionally focused on using SLIFE' strengths and needs rather than treating students as empty vessels needing to be filled.

Reflection and Action

The next step in Freire's humanizing pedagogy requires critical reflection and human action. To reduce or eliminate any form of oppression, transformative dialogue and problem-posed learning must evolve into application and action. Because SLIFE lacked regular opportunities to participate in transformative dialogue and engage in problem solving, limited action took place to address the needs of SLIFE. Action only follows after students become aware of their oppression and reflect on it.

Scholars propose that teachers who practice a humanizing pedagogy "explicitly teach the school's codes and customs, and/or mainstream knowledge, to enable students to fully participate in the dominant culture" (Huerta, 2011, p. 39). Students need to acquire the "mainstream" knowledge base and learn how to dialogue within the dominant society. Freire's (2000) theory of humanizing pedagogy promotes the idea teachers should avoid minimizing students' existing culture, but rather should supplement their skills.

Student Ownership

Finally, Freire (2000) emphasized that human pedagogy belongs to the student. Students should determine what they need to learn and content should be meaningful to their lives. "Attempting to liberate the oppressed without their reflective participation in the act of liberation

is to treat them as objects which must be saved from a burning building” (Freire, 2000, p. 65).

SLIFE are not involved in these conversations because in most cases the idea of oppression is not universal or recognized. A humanizing education requires learners to become engaged in their learning process and education path.

Summary

Kim’s theory of cross-cultural adaptation demonstrates the difficulties SLIFE women must face when attempting to integrate into the United States. The conditions leading to a successful transition, which set up an immigrant for success, are not prevalent among SLIFE women. While SLIFE women entered the United States with significant cultural, academic, and language differences causing them considerable stress, they also managed to live within familiar cultures and backgrounds in their new communities. This made dependence on others outside of their cultural group less necessary, and thus became a barrier to successful transition. The educational system was less than prepared to meet the needs of SLIFE when they arrived. These conditions affected progress as the women attempted to adapt. The inability to communicate and integrate continued to slow progress. The SLIFE women were often distracted by physical, emotional, and mental circumstances hindering adaptation. Despite SLIFE women’s eagerness to become more American, these obstacles made the process difficult.

Using Freire’s (2000) humanizing pedagogy, educators and educational systems can create learning environments to empower SLIFE women. “This, then, is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well” (p. 45). Currently, SLIFE women are not consistently exposed to the principles of Freire’s human pedagogy. While some teachers tried to know SLIFE as whole persons, most were unaware of their stories and backgrounds. The remaining pillars of Freire’s pedagogy are mostly non-

existent within the school system: uncovering oppression, dialoguing and problem-posing learning, critical reflection and action, and student owned pedagogy.

SLIFE women experienced extreme difficulty when attempting to adapt to their new culture. I used this knowledge to make recommendations designed to alleviate these difficulties. In the next chapter I summarize my study, and describe the implications and recommendations based on the experiences of SLIFE women and educators.

CHAPTER EIGHT: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I examined the cultural and academic experiences of SLIFE women living in the United States. SLIFE women experienced significant trauma prior to and on their journey to the United States. They faced obstacles as they entered, settled, and participated in the education system. These experiences and their lack of formal education adversely affected SLIFE. I summarize my findings and discuss the implications of my study for the educational field. My findings included the following themes: traumatic experiences and effects, settlement and cultural shock, and education and the future (see *Figure 5*, p. 177). *Figure 5* illustrates the way trauma, settlement and cultural shock, and education create the context for the women's life. The themes are ever-present in their lives.

To improve the education of SLIFE women, I recommended four key areas for development, including: (1) mental health services, (2) mentorships, (3) improvements in teacher preparation and ongoing professional development, and (4) changes in educational programming and services provided to SLIFE. Different types of trauma affected SLIFE women's personal wellbeing, settlement, and the ability to effectively participate in the educational system. Trauma is an ever-present factor in the lives of SLIFE women.

Traumatic Experiences and Effects

SLIFE women experienced trauma before entering the United States and then continued to struggle due to the after effects of these experiences as they attempted to adapt to life in the United States. All participants faced significant trauma, such as poverty, violence, and

separation from loved ones, loss of their native home, and later, culture shock.



Figure 5: Experience of SLIFE women

Facing significant trauma, such as poverty, violence, and separation from loved ones, Latina women sought refuge in the United States; however, Latina women continued to experience trauma as they traveled to the United States. Coyotes (paid guides) secretly led them through jungles, rivers, and borders. Some, traveling for days alone, experienced sexual assault, felt hunger, and feared for their lives. Once in the United States, SLIFE women were at the mercy of immigration officials as they waited for permission to reunite with a family in their new country.

Likewise, SLIFE women arriving from refugee camps in East Africa also experienced significant trauma. Before arriving, they lived in crowded refugee camps. Some of the women remembered fleeing their home country and arriving at the refugee camp in search of safety. However, refugee camps did not provide the safe haven the refugees sought as the camps were filled with violence and lacked basic resources for daily living. Once SLIFE women learned

they would be granted asylum to the United States, they waited many years for the paperwork to be processed, continuing to live in poor conditions. Whether entering by foot or arriving by plane, SLIFE women, once in the United States, continued to experience trauma and struggled to survive and adapt to a new culture.

Settlement and Cultural Shock

Once the SLIFE women settled in the United States, trauma continued as they were exposed to people, technology, and a culture completely unfamiliar to them. SLIFE women's lack of English limited the ability to communicate, ask for help, or understand the help available to them. Although government, community, and religious organizations assist some immigrants as they resettle, the transition is slow and confusing. SLIFE women had to learn to navigate public transportation to attend school. Climate differences also forced SLIFE women to adapt.

The roles of men and women, and children and adults also produced culture shock for many SLIFE women. Gender norms in the United States differed from their home countries. The SLIFE women had to navigate these gender differences in their new culture. Likewise, children began interpreting for adults in their new language causing familial roles to reverse between child and parent. Families also struggled as their children adapted and sometimes assimilated to a culture with which they were not familiar or did not approve.

Kim's (2001) cross-cultural adaptation theory states successful adaptation occurs when the immigrant engages with the host culture through communication and dependence. These encounters provide opportunities for the immigrant to practice English, build relationships, integrate into her new culture, and learn about future opportunities. Integration with the host culture was limited for many SLIFE women. Many times, Latina immigrants sought out other Latina immigrants and East African Immigrants sought out other East African immigrants. The

familiarity of language and culture provided security and little interaction was necessary between the immigrant and the host culture, delaying adaptation. The traumatic effects of cultural shock and transition impacted SLIFE women. Meanwhile SLIFE women continued to face trauma as they integrated into the United States educational system and tried to prepare for their future.

Education and the Future

As they entered the educational system with hope of preparing for their future, SLIFE women faced additional trauma. SLIFE soon realized they were behind their American peers, as they struggled to read, write, and compute. SLIFE women did not understand school culture or how to use school materials. They sat in classrooms, burdened with trauma, confusion, and fear. Teachers, unprepared to meet the variety of needs SLIFE women carry, felt frustrated by an educational system that was not accessible nor designed for all students.

SLIFE brought stories that often included emotional and mental scars, impacting them in the classroom. They arrived with a limited academic background; never having held a book or pencil, unable to read or write in any language, with no mathematical background, and unfamiliar with school or American culture. English language development and mainstream teachers expressed frustration at their lack of preparation in meeting the needs of these students and an educational system that is not accessible nor designed for all students.

While SLIFE women shared their aspirations for the future, these dreams often seemed difficult to attain because of their limited awareness of the possibilities and the steps needed to reach their goals. Based on the current educational system, SLIFE women will continue to face the obstacles in their path to fulfilling their dreams.

Implications and Recommendations

Relying on the voices of the SLIFE women and their teachers, I incorporated their frustrations and suggestions into my recommendations. Using Kim's (2001) theory of cross-cultural adaptation, I suggest including mental health support for students and their families, teacher/staff preparation in understanding cultural differences and needs, and adaptations in classroom instruction to accommodate those needs. Freire's (2000) humanizing pedagogy also contributed to my recommendations for academic approaches designed to empower SLIFE women through education.

I organized my recommendations into four key areas: mental health services, mentorship, teacher preparation and training, education structures. I describe each area and then describe how the focus might positively impact the lives and success of SLIFE women (see Table 3, p.181).

Table 3:
SLIFE educational recommendations

RECOMMENDATION	WILL IMPACT...
Mental Health Services	Support SLIFE women with: PTSD Cultural Shock Changing family dynamics Separation
Mentorship	Increase exposure to: Language Culture Career planning
Teacher Preparation and Training	Provide training in: Identification of SLIFE Background Cultural differences Basic literacy and numeracy development Project Based Learning Strategies
Education Structure	Meet SLIFE need by: Newcomer Program Integration Courses Family Education Graduation requirement adjustments

Mental Health Services

Because participants experienced stress during entry and settlement, a comprehensive mental health system should be offered to all SLIFE. This support must be available at the school setting in the SLIFE's native languages. Due to economic realities and cultural stigma, many immigrants are unable to access these types of services in their communities. Providing mental health support in school settings eliminates some of these barriers. Many immigrant parents trust in education as an institution and this may motivate them to allow their children to participate in school-based mental health programs. School-based mental health providers can also work

directly with the teachers who see the student daily. This type of support will assist SLIFE women as they work through past traumas often associated with PTSD.

Tier one mental health supports are universal and must be available to all students. This includes preventative school-wide behavioral and emotional education programs as well as programs to build community among all students. Teachers, mental health professionals, and staff should all participate in these preventative programs

Tier two supports, or targeted mental health services, must be immediately provided and designed to address specific needs such as cultural adaptation. Students receive services regularly in group or individual therapy sessions. SLIFE must have access to small group sessions, meeting once or twice a week to discuss their experiences in their first language. When necessary, individualized therapy sessions should also be available with a licensed provider in a student's language.

When a SLIFE's mental and emotional needs become clearer, tier three services must be provided to address areas of concern. Tier three is more intensive, including various providers trained to respond to the SLIFE woman's unique challenges. SLIFE receiving this level of intervention meet frequently.

All these service levels should be included during the school day when students are easily available to participate. Frequency is dependent on the level of need, meeting anywhere from daily to weekly. Ongoing support also provides ongoing assistance as SLIFE women adapt into a new culture.

School-based mental health programs must also be provided to families. These programs educate parents about mental health needs. Mental and emotional services should also be available for families in helping them process the changing family dynamics associated with

cross-cultural adaptation. Services must be available when families are available. Like student supports, families may have different levels of need and the support should adjust accordingly.

School-based mental health programs may be provided within the school system or through community organizations housed within a school community. Mental and emotional health for a SLIFE must be part of her education plan. Therefore, mental health resources should be part of the SLIFE's educational experience. Next, I describe my recommendations for mentorship programs available to SLIFE women.

Mentorships

SLIFE women faced trauma as they try to adapt and adjust in a new culture and academic setting. I recommend establishing mentorships. These structured programs provide cross-cultural experiences and exchanges between SLIFE and their English-speaking peers.

Mentorships may be provided through school-based organizations, pairing interested English-speaking students with SLIFE. These mentorships benefit the SLIFE and English students.

SLIFE women may increase their language development, build relationships, and integrate into the new culture through mentorships. English speaking mentors develop an understanding of the immigrants' culture and experiences. Structured mentorships provide opportunities for students to develop cross-cultural relationships. Relationships may develop between the SLIFE woman and the host student through class projects, community-based projects, and after-school events. These experiences allow the SLIFE woman to have exposure to the English language and cultural norms.

A second type of mentorship I recommend is one that provides academic and post-secondary support. This mentorship program should be community-based, providing exposure to career possibilities. SLIFE lack cultural capital in navigating the educational and post-

secondary system. This type of mentorship exposes SLIFE women to various opportunities and outlines the educational path necessary to qualify for these careers. The mentor assists the SLIFE woman to reach her goals through ongoing support. Providing both types of mentorships enables SLIFE women to adapt and integrate into the culture more effectively.

Teacher Preparation and Training

I recommend teacher preparation programs include training on immigrant students, specifically SLIFE. As the immigrant and refugee population continues to increase, it is inevitable teachers will service these students in their classroom. These teacher preparation programs must include immigrant realities and cultural awareness. Understanding the experiences of SLIFE and their different cultural perspectives will prepare new teachers to identify SLIFE and adjust instruction. Preparing English language development teachers with basic knowledge of literacy and numeracy development is also necessary. ELL teachers must be able to identify SLIFE with limited literacy and numeracy skills and have the tools to help them develop these basic skills.

I also recommend ongoing training to all staff regarding the needs of SLIFE learners. A proactive approach supports teachers and SLIFE. These professional development opportunities should include mental and emotional health symptoms and supports, cultural awareness, and successful strategies. Informing teaching staff about the mental and emotional challenges of SLIFE and immigrant students gives insight into student behaviors and how to address them. Staff can reflect on their own cultural identity and privilege, its impact on other cultures, and how to support all their students across cultures through cultural awareness training. This work is the beginning of Freire's (2001) humanizing pedagogy.

Teachers would benefit from specific strategies designed to support SLIFE learners. While ELL teachers should understand in-depth basic literacy and numeracy development, mainstream teachers should also be aware of ways to support students who are at the early stages of these skills. Approaches to learning such as project-based learning and problem-posing education both engage SLIFE in hands-on, applicable learning experiences. Teachers should also understand the value of translation, collaboration, visuals, and scaffolded learning. These approaches and strategies will not only benefit their SLIFE and ELL students, but all students.

Educational Structures

SLIFE arrive in the United States and enter a system with a limited design to meet their needs. The educational system assumes “traditional” students participate in the process for at least 12 years, and courses and learning experience developed over the years adds new information and skills. The system does not consider the difficulties experienced in acquiring a new language and using it to understand new concepts and ideas foreign to the learner’s culture. Legislation mandates that certain courses be mastered during a specific time period to ensure students receive a high school diploma. While this approach is equal for all American students, it is not equitable.

I recommend adjusting the educational system to better meet the needs of SLIFE. This involves newcomer programs, integration, applicable courses, bilingual education, and new graduation requirements. Students enter the school building lost, confused, and unable to communicate. Providing a newcomer setting where a SLIFE or immigrant student can be introduced to their new environment without distraction is key in the initial phase. Students can learn basic phrases, basic academic skills, soft skills such as school behaviors, and explore their

new culture in this environment. This support should be in a small setting and individualized to the newcomer.

SLIFE should also be integrated into the mainstream culture as soon as possible to begin to participate in their new language and culture. This integration takes place immediately for extended periods of time for some learners, and for others the integration is in a controlled environment, such as a classroom. The approaches should be individualized to the learner, their experiences and previous knowledge. Creating opportunities for interaction, no matter how short, is essential in the adaptation process.

School systems must also reimagine course offerings for SLIFE. Rather than focusing on a SLIFE's deficits and what has not been learned, schools and courses must build on their existing strengths and skills. Bilingual courses offered in a student's native languages offers one method to build upon students' strengths. SLIFE women who arrive in ninth grade may have only four years to learn before they enter the workforce. It is important to ensure classes offered are applicable and prepare SLIFE for post-secondary success. Courses that teach technical knowledge and skills may provide hands-on learning valuable in a chosen trade.

In addition to creating a structure that addresses SLIFE's needs, creating a structure for SLIFE families should also be considered. This would include providing services within the educational system, such as basic language instruction, cultural exposure, and navigation of the U.S. educational system. Providing these services to SLIFE families may also positively impact SLIFE women.

I recommend the graduation and diploma program be re-examined for SLIFE. The diploma should represent student achievement. Currently, SLIFE receive a diploma by completing courses outlined by the Department of Education. Often, students pass these

predetermined courses with little understanding and limited connection to the content. Instead, more applicable courses should be created for SLIFE. Success should be measured in these courses and a diploma received. This change in the diploma process provides a SLIFE with courses necessary for success and essential documentation for their future.

Recommendation for Further Research

SLIFE and immigrant students will continue to flood schools in the United States as the number of displaced people rises. Teachers and schools must be prepared to service each one. Each student brings a unique background and story to their United States classroom, bringing new and different challenges. Additional research is necessary to continue to address the needs of SLIFE women. Research must focus on mental health resources designed to assist SLIFE experiencing trauma and transition. Research must also focus on mentorship programs intended to develop SLIFE cultural understanding and intercultural relationships. Continual analysis and development of specific strategies to support SLIFE's academic needs is crucial. Finally, further research on newcomer centers providing unique approaches to learning, must also be analyzed. As the SLIFE population continues to rise, we must be prepared to meet their needs. Continuing this research will prepare the American educational system for future refugees and immigrants entering the United States.

Limitations

This study was limited by several factors. All eight SLIFE participants had a different cultural background from the researcher and none were proficient in the English language. All were provided an opportunity to use an interpreter, but only two chose to do so. At times during the interview, the participant was unable to select the "right" word or phrase that would best

describe her thought. Cultural and language nuances made it difficult for me to interpret everything during the interview.

Due to the nature of the study, the SLIFE participants were often reluctant to share details of their traumatic background. My limited relationships with participants likely reduced the comfort level required to share personal information. The political climate at the time of the interviews was also unpredictable. The new U.S. administration may have caused immigrants to live in fear of deportation to their home country for any reason. These concerns may have limited the information participants might otherwise share during an interview.

Closing Remarks

If the world continues to experience war, poverty, and injustice, our children will be its greatest victims. Education can be an equalizer that provides hope for the next generation. We need to be prepared to meet the needs of the world's children as families continue to flee their homelands in search of peace. The following poem by Warsan Shire (2015) illustrates the plight of many immigrants and refugees providing understanding to their crises.

Home Warsan Shire (2015)

no one leaves home unless
home is the mouth of a shark
you only run for the border
when you see the whole city running as well

your neighbors running faster than you
breath bloody in their throats
the boy you went to school with
who kissed you dizzy behind the old tin factory
is holding a gun bigger than his body
you only leave home
when home won't let you stay.

no one leaves home unless home chases you
 fire under feet
 hot blood in your belly
 it's not something you ever thought of doing
 until the blade burnt threats into
 your neck
 and even then you carried the anthem under
 your breath
 only tearing up your passport in an airport toilets
 sobbing as each mouthful of paper
 made it clear that you wouldn't be going back.

 you have to understand,
 that no one puts their children in a boat
 unless the water is safer than the land
 no one burns their palms
 under trains
 beneath carriages
 no one spends days and nights in the stomach of a truck
 feeding on newspaper unless the miles travelled
 means something more than journey.
 no one crawls under fences
 no one wants to be beaten
 pitied

no one chooses refugee camps
 or strip searches where your
 body is left aching
 or prison,
 because prison is safer
 than a city of fire
 and one prison guard
 in the night
 is better than a truckload
 of men who look like your father
 no one could take it
 no one could stomach it
 no one skin would be tough enough

 the
 go home blacks
 refugees
 dirty immigrants
 asylum seekers
 sucking our country dry

niggers with their hands out
 they smell strange
 savage
 messed up their country and now they want
 to mess ours up
 how do the words
 the dirty looks
 roll off your backs
 maybe because the blow is softer
 than a limb torn off
 or the words are more tender
 than fourteen men between
 your legs
 or the insults are easier
 to swallow
 than rubble
 than bone
 than your child body
 in pieces.
 i want to go home,
 but home is the mouth of a shark
 home is the barrel of the gun
 and no one would leave home
 unless home chased you to the shore
 unless home told you
 to quicken your legs
 leave your clothes behind
 crawl through the desert
 wade through the oceans
 drown
 save
 be hunger
 beg
 forget pride
 your survival is more important
 no one leaves home until home is a sweaty voice in your ear
 saying-
 leave,
 run away from me now
 i don't know what i've become
 but i know that anywhere
 is safer than here

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Request for help identifying participants – email

Fellow SLIFE educators and colleagues,

I am a doctoral candidate at St. Thomas University researching the question; *How do SLIFE women experience and make meaning of their interrupted education experiences and future educational and career opportunities in Minnesota?* The purpose of this qualitative narrative research study is to give a voice to young women who arrive in Minnesota as teenagers with limited English and limited education in their home country. Through their stories, we can understand how to best service and equip SLIFE women and their new lives in Minnesota.

Your help in identifying potential participants is critical for this research. An ideal participant would be as follows:

- Female
- Currently between 18-22
- Arrived in the United States after the age of 14
- Current Minnesota resident with legal residence status
- Little or no literacy and/or numeracy skills in native language upon arrival to US
- Educational experience in Minnesota may vary
- All cultural backgrounds welcome
- All languages welcome - translators provided if necessary

I am excited to hear the stories of female immigrants in the United States regarding their lives before the United States, educational experiences, current life experiences, and hopes for the future. Interviews will be conducted in one hour and all participants will be anonymous. Under strict ethical guidelines of the International Review Board and St. Thomas, disclosures and confidentiality rules will be followed. Here is a sampling of conversation starters:

Before the United States

1. Describe your childhood? Where did you grow up? Who was in your family? What did you do for fun? What occupations did your parents have? Did you go to school? When? Describe school.
2. What reasons did your family decide to come to the United States? Minnesota? How did you feel about coming? Who did you leave behind? What were you excited about? What did you hope would happen?

Education after arrival in the United States

3. When you arrived, where did you live? Where did you go to school? Describe how life/culture/school was/is different here from where you came from.
4. Describe how you felt in school in Minnesota. What kind of classes did you take? What was/is the hardest part? What was the easiest part? How many years did you or are you in school? How important is going to school for you? For your family? For your friends?

Current and future realities

5. What are you doing now? Describe a day. Are you happy? Do you like life in Minnesota or/and would you like to return to your home country? What is home to you now? Do you have suggestions for changing your educational experience? What would make it better or different?

6. What do you hope your future will be like in 5 years, 10 years, and 20 years? How can you accomplish these goals? Has your education prepared you for your goals?

Please contact me with anyone you believe would make a great candidate for this research.

Melanie Keillor

mdkeillor@gmail.com

651-402-7726

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form: SLIFE woman (English)



Consent Form

1046499-1 *Voices of SLIFE Women*

You are invited to participate in a research study about immigrant women's educational experiences in the United States. I invite you to participate in this research. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a female immigrant that came to the United States after age 14 with an interrupted education. You have a legal status in the United States. You are eligible to participate in this study because you are between the ages of 18 and 21 and you did not have formal schooling for two or more years before arriving in the United States. The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision whether or not you would like to participate. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by doctoral student, Melanie Keillor, under the supervision of Dr. Sarah Noonan from the University of St. Thomas. This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of St. Thomas.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to speak directly to immigrant women about their experiences in the United States educational systems. The United States is experiencing a growing number of teens entering school with little prior education. Students 14 and over, more than two years behind their age level peers academically, identify as students with limited or interrupted formal education or 'SLIFE', (Minn. Stat. § 124D.59, Subd. 2a). A majority of SLIFE students also identify as non-native English speakers with low or no literacy in their native or home language (DeCapua, 2016). The state of Minnesota estimates 15,000-25,000 SLIFE students attend Minnesota schools today, about 25% of the current ELL population. The purpose of this qualitative narrative research study is to give a voice to young women who arrive in Minnesota as teenagers with limited English and limited education in their home country. Listening to the students themselves, educators will understand their experiences, their view of the future, and how to best meet their needs, particularly among women. Through their stories, we can understand how to best service and equip these women for their new lives in Minnesota.

Procedures

If you agree to participate in this study, I will ask you to do the following things: You will participate in one 60-90 minute interview. I will ask you a variety of questions regarding your experiences regarding their past, educational experiences, current life experiences, and hopes for the future. You will be audiotaped during the interview. You will select the location for this interview. You may select an interpreter or I will provide one at your request. Contact information will be collected. If at any time additional follow-up is necessary, I will use this contact information. Follow up will be determined if clarification of previous statements is needed when I am doing analysis. I will interview between 10 and 12 women for the study.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study

The study has risks. The study involves personal interview questions. Due to the nature of these questions, recalling traumatic or distressing events may cause emotional distress. You will be asked to share personal information and emotions. This information may focus on information which makes you mentally tired, embarrassed, or ashamed. The Interprofessional Center through the Psychology department at the University of St. Thomas phone number (651) 962-4960 is given in the event additional support is needed. You will be required to verbally rephrase these risks before signing any consents forms. If at anytime during the study you feel uncomfortable answering a question or continuing, you reserve the right to not answer or withdraw from the study.

There are no direct benefits for participating in this study.

Privacy

Your privacy will be protected while you participate in this study. You will select a neutral location for the interview. You may select an interpreter or request a neutral translator that I would provide. The translator will sign Privacy forms and non-disclosure forms. You will select a pseudonym to be used throughout the research project. Your names and contact information will be collected and stored in a separate location for use of any follow up interviews.

Confidentiality

The records of this study will be kept confidential. In any sort of report I publish, I will not include information that will make it possible to identify you. The types of records I will create include audio recordings, transcripts, computer records, and data lists. Audio recordings will be stored on my password protected recording device. I will HIRE A PROFESSIONAL TRANSCRIBER TO PUT the audio recording into a written format. YOU WILL REMAIN ANONYMOUS DURING THIS PROCESS. This will be stored on my password protected computer. Your personal information such as name and contact

information will be stored in a separate file electronically and in a locked safe. I will use the written-out interview to create categories and themes. This will be done electronically. All electronic data and paper documents will be stored in a locked cabinet in my home. All electronic data will be password protected. Only I will have access to these passwords. After the study is complete, all audio recordings will be deleted. All electronic data will be transferred to a USB file after the completion of the research study. This USB file as well as any paper files will be stored in a locked cabinet in my home. All consent forms will be included in this file. All signed consent forms will be kept for a minimum of three years upon completion of the study. Institutional Review Board officials at the University of St. Thomas reserve the right to inspect all research records to ensure compliance. I cannot guarantee confidentiality if someone reads this research and they recognize your unique story.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Melanie Keillor or the University of St. Thomas. There are no penalties or consequences if you choose not to participate. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Should you decide to withdraw, data collected about you will not be used. You can withdraw by verbally requesting to withdraw from the study. You are also free to skip any questions I may ask.

Contacts and Questions

My name is Melanie Keillor. You may ask any questions you have now and any time during or after the research procedures. If you have questions later, you may contact me at 651-402-7726 or mdkeillor@gmail.com. My advisor is Dr. Noonan, (651)962-4897. You may also contact the University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board at 651-962-6035 or muen0526@stthomas.edu with any questions or concerns.

Statement of Consent

I have had a conversation with the researcher about this study and have read the above information. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to participate in the study. I am at least 18 years of age. I give permission to be audio recorded during this study.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Signature of Study Participant

Date

Print Name of Study Participant

Signature of Researcher

Date

DeCapua, A. (2016, October 20). *Meeting the Needs of Students with limited/formal education*.
Lecture presented in St. Olaf College, Northfield.

Appendix C: Informed Consent; SLIFE woman (Spanish)



Formulario de consentimiento

1046499-1 *Las voces de las mujeres Slife*

Usted está invitado a participar en un estudio de investigación sobre las experiencias educativas de las mujeres inmigrantes en los Estados Unidos. Los invito a participar en esta investigación. Usted ha sido seleccionado como posible participante porque usted es un inmigrante femenina que llegó a los Estados Unidos después de 14 años de edad con una educación interrumpida. Usted tiene un estatus legal en los Estados Unidos. Usted es elegible para participar en este estudio porque usted está entre las edades de 18 y 21 y que no tienen educación formal durante dos o más años antes de llegar a los Estados Unidos. La siguiente información se proporciona con el fin de ayudarlo a tomar una decisión informada si o no desea participar. Por favor, lea este formulario y hacer cualquier pregunta que pueda tener antes de aceptar participar en el estudio.

Este estudio está siendo realizado por el estudiante de doctorado, Melanie Keillor, bajo la supervisión del Dr. Sarah Noonan de la Universidad de St. Thomas. Este estudio fue aprobado por la Junta de Revisión Institucional de la Universidad de St. Thomas.

antecedentes

El propósito de este estudio es hablar directamente a las mujeres inmigrantes sobre sus experiencias en los sistemas educativos de los Estados Unidos. Los Estados Unidos está experimentando un creciente número de adolescentes ingresan a la escuela con poca educación previa. Los estudiantes de 14 años, más de dos años detrás de sus compañeros de la misma edad académicamente, se identifican como estudiantes con educación formal limitada o interrumpida o 'Slife', (Minn. Stat. § 124D.59, Subd. 2a). La mayoría de los estudiantes Slife también identificar a los hablantes como no nativos de inglés de baja o nula alfabetización en su lengua materna o en el hogar (DeCapua, 2016). El estado de Minnesota estima 15.000-25.000 estudiantes Slife asisten a las escuelas de Minnesota hoy en día, alrededor del 25% de la población actual de ELL. El propósito de este estudio de investigación cualitativa narrativa es dar voz a las mujeres jóvenes que llegan en Minnesota como adolescentes con conocimientos limitados Inglés y educación limitada en su país de origen. Escuchar a los propios estudiantes, educadores van a entender sus experiencias, su visión del futuro, y la mejor manera de satisfacer sus necesidades, especialmente entre las mujeres. A través de sus historias, podemos entender cómo mejor servicio y dotar a estas mujeres por sus nuevas vidas en Minnesota.

procedimientos

Si acepta participar en este estudio, voy a pedirle que haga las siguientes cosas: Usted participará en una entrevista de 60-90 minutos. Voy a hacerle una variedad de preguntas acerca de sus experiencias en relación con su pasado, experiencias educativas, experiencias de vida actuales, y las esperanzas para el futuro. Se le grabaron durante la entrevista. Deberá seleccionar la ubicación para esta entrevista. Usted puede seleccionar un intérprete o que va a proporcionar una a su solicitud. La información de contacto será recogido. Si en cualquier momento un seguimiento adicional es necesario, voy a utilizar esta información de contacto. Seguimiento se determinará si se necesita una aclaración de las declaraciones anteriores cuando estoy haciendo el análisis. Voy a entrevistar a entre 10 y 12 mujeres para el estudio.

Riesgos y beneficios de participar en el estudio

El estudio tiene riesgos. El estudio consiste en preguntas de la entrevista personal. Debido a la naturaleza de estas preguntas, recordar eventos traumáticos o estresantes puede causar angustia emocional. TúEs posible que deba compartir información personal y las emociones. Esta información puede centrarse en la información que hace que mentalmente cansado, vergüenza, o vergüenza. El Centro Interprofesional a través del departamento de Psicología en el número de teléfono de la Universidad de St. Thomas (651) 962-4960 se da en el caso de que se necesita un apoyo adicional. Se le requerirá a reformular verbalmente estos riesgos antes firmar cualquier forma consentimientos. Si en cualquier momento durante el estudio no se siente cómodo respondiendo a una pregunta o continua, se reserva el derecho de no responder o retirarse del estudio.

No hay beneficios directos para participar en este estudio.

Intimidad

Su privacidad será protegida al tiempo que participar en este estudio. Tendrá que elegir un lugar neutral para la entrevista. Usted puede seleccionar un intérprete o solicitar un traductor neutral que iba a proporcionar. El traductor firmar los formularios de privacidad y formas de no divulgación. Tendrá que elegir un seudónimo para ser utilizado en todo el proyecto de investigación. Sus nombres e información de contacto serán recogidos y almacenados en un lugar separado para el uso de las entrevistas de seguimiento.

confidencialidad

Los registros de este estudio serán confidenciales. En cualquier tipo de informe publico, no voy a incluir información que permita identificarlo. Los tipos de registros CREARÉ incluyen grabaciones de audio, transcripciones, los registros de computadora, y listas de datos. grabaciones de audio se almacenan en el dispositivo de grabación protegido por contraseña. ALQUILARÉ UN TRANSCRIPTOR PROFESIONAL PARA PONER la grabación de audio en un formato escrito. PERMANECERÁ ANÓNIMO DURANTE ESTE PROCESO. Esto se almacena en el ordenador protegido con contraseña. Su información personal como el nombre y la información de contacto se almacena en un archivo separado por vía electrónica y en una caja cerrada. Voy a utilizar la entrevista escrita a cabo para crear categorías y temas. Esto se hará por vía electrónica. Todos los documentos de datos electrónicos y en papel serán almacenados en un armario cerrado con llave en mi casa. Todos los datos electrónicos estarán protegidos contraseña. Sólo voy a tener acceso a estas contraseñas. Tras el estudio se ha completado, se eliminarán todas las grabaciones de audio. Todos los datos electrónicos serán transferidos a un archivo USB después de la finalización del estudio de investigación. Este archivo USB, así como los archivos de papel serán almacenados en un armario cerrado con llave en mi casa. Todos los formularios de consentimiento se incluirán en este archivo. Todos los formularios de consentimiento firmados se mantendrán durante un mínimo de tres años tras la finalización del estudio. funcionarios de la Junta de Revisión Institucional de la Universidad de St. Thomas se reservan el derecho de inspeccionar todos los registros de la investigación para asegurar el cumplimiento. No puedo garantizar la confidencialidad si alguien lee esta investigación y que reconozca su historia única.

La naturaleza voluntaria del Estudio

Su participación en este estudio es completamente voluntaria. Su decisión de si debe o no participar no afectará sus relaciones actuales o futuras con Melanie Keillor o la Universidad de St. Thomas. No hay sanciones o consecuencias si decide no participar. Si decide participar, usted es libre de retirarse en cualquier momento sin penalización o pérdida de beneficios a los que tiene derecho. Si decide retirarse, no se utilizarán los datos recopilados sobre usted. Usted puede retirar por verbalmente solicitar a retirarse del estudio. También es libre de saltar cualquier pregunta que pueda hacer.

Contactos y Preguntas

Mi nombre es Melanie Keillor. Puede hacer cualquier pregunta que tenga ahora y en cualquier momento durante o después de los procedimientos de investigación. Si tiene alguna pregunta posterior, puede ponerse en contacto conmigo en el 651-402-7726 omdkeillor@gmail.com. Mi asesor es el Dr. Noonan, (651) 962-4897. También puede comunicarse con la Universidad de Junta de Revisión Institucional de St. Thomas en 651-962-6035 o muen0526@stthomas.edu con cualquier pregunta o preocupación.

Declaración de consentimiento

He tenido una conversación con el investigador de este estudio y leído la información anterior. Mis preguntas han sido contestadas a mi satisfacción. Doy mi consentimiento para participar en el estudio. Tengo por lo menos 18 años de edad. Doy permiso para estar audio grabado durante este estudio.

Se le dará una copia de este formulario para llevar para sus registros.

Firma del participante en el estudio**Fecha**

Escriba el nombre del participante en el estudio

Firma del Investigador**Fecha**

DeCapua, A. (2016, 20 de octubre). Satisfacer las necesidades de los estudiantes con educación limitada / formal. Conferencia presentada en St. Olaf College, Northfield.

Appendix D: Informed Consent; SLIFE woman (Somali)



Consent Form

1046499-1Voices of SLIFE Women

Waxaa lagugu martiqaaday in ay ka qayb daraasaddan cilmibaadhista ku saabsan waayo aragnimo waxbarasho oo dalka Mareykanka ah dumarka waddanka u soo guurey ee ah. Waxaana ugu yeedhi inaad ka qayb cilmi. Waxaad ayaa loo doortay sida qaybgale suurto gal, maxaa yeelay, waxaad tahay muhaajir dumar ah oo u yimid dalka Mareykanka ka dib markii ay 14 jir waxbarasho kala gooyey. Waxaad leedahay xaaladda sharci ah oo dalka Mareykanka ah. Waxaad xaq u leedahay in ay ka qayb daraasaddan, maxaa yeelay, waxaad tahay da'doodu u dhaxeeyso 18 ilaa 21 oo aad u ma lahayn waxbarasho rasmi ah muddo laba sano ama ka badan ka hor yimid oo dalka Mareykanka ah. Macluumaadka soo socda waxaa la siiyaa si ay u caawiyaan in aad go'aan ah ku wargeliyay in aad jeclaan lahaa in ay ka qayb. Fadlan akhri foomkan oo weydii su'aal kasta oo aad qabto ka hor inta uusan ogolaanin inuu ku noqon daraasadda.

daraasadda waxaa loo sameeyay arday PhD, Melanie Keillor, iyada oo ay kormeerayaan Dr. Sarah Noonan oo ka tirsan jaamacadda St. Thomas. daraasaddan lagu ansixiyay Gudiga Dib u eegida ee jaamacadda St. Thomas.

Information Background

Ujeedada cilmibaaristaan waa in dumarka soo galootiga ah oo ku saabsan khibradahooda in nidaamka waxbarasho ee United States si toos loola hadlo. Mareykanka waxaa ka haysato tiro sii kordhaysa oodhalinyarada gelaya dugsi waxbarasho ka hor yar. Ardayda 14 iyo ka badan, ka badan laba sano ka danbeeya facooda heerka da'da ay tacliin ahaan, loo aqoonsado sida ardayda waxbarashada tooska ah oo kooban ama kala gooyey ama 'SLIFE', (Minn. Stat. § 124D.59, Qodob. 2a). Inta badan ardayda SLIFE sidoo kale aqoonsado hadla Ingiriisi sida non-hooyo la akhris-yar ama aan afkooda hooyo ama guriga (DeCapua, 2016). Dawladdu waxay of Minnesota qiyaastay 15,000-25,000 ardayda SLIFE dhigata dugsiyada Minnesota maanta, ku saabsan 25% dadka ELL hadda. Ujeedada this daraasaddan cilmibaadhista sheeko tayo leh waa in la siiyo haween dhalinyaro ah kuwaas yimaadaan sidii dhalinyarada la Ingiriisi kooban iyo waxbarasho xaddidan ee dalkiisa hooyo ee Minnesota cod. Dhageysiga ardayda naftooda, barayaasha garan doontaa aragnimadooda, ay view of mustaqbalka, iyo sida ugu wanaagsan ee daboolaan baahidooda, gaar ahaan haweenka ka mid ah. Iyada oo sheekooyinkooda, waxaan u garan karaa sida loo adeeg fiican iyo qalabayn haweenka, kuwaas oo ay noloshooda cusub ee Minnesota.

Nidaamka

Haddii aad ogolaato in ay ka qayb daraasaddan, waxaan ku weydiin doonaa inaad sameyn waxyaabaha soo socda: Waxaad ka qayb qaadan doonaan mid ka mid ah wareysi 60-90 daqiiqo. Baan idin weyddiinayaa, noocyo kala duwan oo su'aalo ah oo ku saabsan waayo-aragnimo ku saabsan ee la soo dhaafay, waayo aragnimo waxbarasho, waayo-aragnimada nolosha hadda, iyo rajada mustaqbalka. Waxaad la audiotaped doonaa inta lagu guda jiro wareysiga. Waxaad dooran doonaa meesha uu wareysi this. Waxaad dooran kartaa turjumaan ama aan ka mid codsigaaga ku siin doonaa. Cidda lagala xiriirayo aqbaartan la soo ururin doonin. Haddii wakhti kasta oo dheeraad ah follow-up waa lagama maarmaan, waxaan u isticmaali doonaa macluumaadka xiriirka this. Dabagal lagu go'aamin doonaa haddii cadeeyo statements hore waxaa loo baahan yahay marka aan wax u samaynayo falanqaynta. Waxaan waraysi doonaa inta u dhaxaysa 10 iyo 12 haween ah, waayo, daraasadda.

Halista iyo Faa'idooyinka Ahaanshaha ee Daraasadda

Daraasaddu waxay leedahay khataro. Daraasaddu waxay ku lug leedahay su'aalo wareysi shaqsi ah. Sababo la nooca ah su'aalahan, dib dhacdooyinka xanuunka ama saxariir waxay keeni kartaa dhibaato maskaxeed. Waxaad Waxaa lagu weydiin doonaa in ay la wadaagaan macluumaadka shakhsiga ah iyo dareenka. Macluumaadkan waxaa laga yaabaa in ay diiradda saaraan warbixin taas oo ka dhigaysa in aad maskax ahaan daal, ka xishoodaan, ama ka xishoon. Xarunta Interprofessional The iyada oo waaxda cilmi nafsiga ee lambarka telefoonka University of St. Thomas ah (651) 962-4960 la siiyo haddii ay dhacdo waxaa loo baahan yahay taageero dheeraad ah. Waxaa lagaaga baahan doonaa inaad af garano halista ka horsaxiixa foomamka ogoshahay. Haddii wakhti kasta inta lagu guda jiro daraasadda aad dareento raaxo jawaabay su'aal ama sii, waxaad xaq u leedahay in aan ka jawaabo ama ka daraasadda baxaan leenahay.

Ma jiraan faa'idooyin toos ah ka qayb daraasaddan.

Privacy

Barayfasigaaga waa la ilaalin doonaa inta aad ka qayb daraasaddan. Waxaad dooran doonaa meel dhexdhexaad ah wareysiga. Waxaad dooran kartaa turjumaan ama aad codsato turjumaan dhexdhexaad ah in aan bixiyo lahaa. Turjubaankii ayaa saxiixi doona foomamka Privacy iyo foomamka shaacin la'aanta. Waxaad dooran doonaa anagu in la isticmaalo oo dhan mashruuc cilmi-baaris ah. magacyada iyo macluumaadka xiriirka la qaadi doonaa oo lagu kaydiyaa meel gaar ah in loo isticmaalo ee wax wareysiyo dabagal.

Qarsoodiga

The diiwaanka daraasaddan loo hayn doonaa si qarsoodi ah. In nooc kasta oo ka mid ah warbixin, anigu waxaan naadinayaa, ma waxaan ka mid noqon doona macluumaad in ka dhigi doonaa suurto gal ah in aad soo ogaato. Waxaan haysan doonaa tarjumaha xirfadlaha ah si loogu duubo duubista codka qaab qoraal ah. WAXAAD U BAAHAN TAHAY WAXYAABAHA KA HELI KARRA DHAMMAAN HALKAN. cajalado Audio lagu kayd in doonaa on password ilaaliyo aan qalab wax lagu qoro. Anigu shakhsi ahaan ay shakiyaan doonaa duubista galay format qoraal ah. Tani waxa lagu kayd in doonaa password my computer ilaaliyo. macluumaadka shakhsiga ah sida magaca iyo macluumaadka xiriirka lagu kayd in doonaa file gaar ah si elektaroonig ah iyo in ammaan qufulan. Waxaan u isticmaali doonaa waraysiga qoraal-soo baxay si ay u abuuraan qaybaha iyo mawduucyada. Taas waxaa la samayn doonaa si elektaroonig ah. Dhamaan waraaqaha xogta iyo warqadda elektarooniga ah lagu kayd in doonaa golaha wasiirada qufulan ee gurigayga. xogta electronka All password waa la ilaalin doonaa. Waxa kaliya ee aan yeelan doonaan in ay helaan sirta ah kuwaas. Ka dib markii daraasadda waa complete, cajalado maqal ah oo dhan waa la tirtiri doonaa. xogta electronka oo dhan waxaa loo wareejin doonaa file USB ah ka dib markii dhamaystirka barashada cilmi baadhistu. file USB Tani waxay sidoo kale wax kasta oo files warqad lagu kayd in doonaa golaha wasiirada qufulan ee gurigayga. Dhammaan foomamka oggolaanshaha lagu dari doonaa file this. Dhammaan foomamka oggolaanshaha oo saxiixan lagu hayn doonaa ugu yaraan saddex sano dhamaystaan daraasadda. Saraakiisha Gudiga Dib u eegida ee Jaamacadda St. Thomas xaq u leeyihiin inay baaraan dhamaan diiwaanada cilmi si loo hubiyo in waafaqsanaanta. Anigu ma ballan qaadi karno sirta haddii qof oo akhrinaya cilmi iyo waxay aqoonsadeen oo aad sheeko u gaar ah.

Nature Voluntary of Study ah

Your qaybgalka daraasaddan waa iskaa. Go'aanka Your inkale si ay uga qayb ma saameyn doonto xiriirka hadda ama mustaqbalka la Melanie Keillor ama jaamacadda St. Thomas. Ma jiraan wax rigoore ama cawaaqibka haddii aad doorato in aadan ka qayb qaadan. Haddii aad go'aansato in aad ka qayb, xor ayaad u tahay in ay ka baxaan waqti kasta oo aan rigoore ama aad weyso macaashka kasta oo aad haddii kale xaq u leedahay. Haddii aad go'aansato inaad la noqoto, xogta la soo ururiyay ee adiga kugu saabsan loo isticmaali maayo. Waxaad la noqon kartaa by hadal ka codsanaya in ay ka baxaan ka daraasadda. Waxaad sidoo kale waa lacag la'aan inay u boodboodaan wax su'aalo ah ayaan weydiin karaa.

Xiriirada iyo Su'aalaha

Magacaygu waa Melanie Keillor. Waxaad weydiin kartaa wixii su'aalo ah ee aad hadda leedahay iyo waqti kasta inta lagu jiro ama ka dib marka nidaamka cilmi baadhista. Haddii aad qabto wax su'aalo ah ka dib, waxaad igala soo xiriiri karaa 651-402-7726 ama amamdkeillor@gmail.com. My taliyaha yahay Dr. Noonan, (651) 962-4897. Waxa kale oo aad la xiriiri kartaa jaamacadda Gudiga Dib u eegida St. Thomas at 651-962-6035 ama muen0526@stthomas.edu wixii su'aalo ah ama walaac ah.

Statement of Consent

Waxaan la sheekaystay cilmi ah oo ku saabsan daraasaddan iyo akhriyey macluumaadka kor ku xusan. su'aalo My ayaa ugu jawaabay si i qancisay. Waxaan gartay in ay ka qayb daraasaddan. Waxaan ahay ugu yaraan 18 sano jir. Waxaan fasax u haystaan in audio diiwaan inta lagu jiro daraasaddan siin.

waxaa la siin doonaa nuqul ka mid ah foomkan si aad u kaydsato xogtaada.

Saxeexa Ka-qaybqaataha Study

Taariikhda

Daabac Magaca Ka-qaybgalaha Study

Saxiixa Cilmi

Taariikhda

DeCapua, A. (2016, October 20). Kulan Baahiyaha Ardayda waxbarashada xaddidan / rasmi ah.
Muxaadaro bandhigay St. Olaf College, Northfield.

Appendix E: Open-Ended Interview Questions/Story starters (English)

Before the United States

1. Describe your childhood? Where did you grow up? Who was in your family? What did you do for fun? What occupations did your parents have? Did you go to school? When? Describe school.
2. What reasons did your family decide to come to the United States? Minnesota? How did you feel about coming? Who did you leave behind? What were you excited about? What did you hope would happen?

Education after arrival in the United States

3. When you arrived, where did you live? Where did you go to school? Describe how life/culture/school was/is different here from where you came from.
4. Describe how you felt in school in Minnesota. What kind of classes did you take? What was/is the hardest part? What was the easiest part? How many years did you or are you in school? How important is going to school for you? For your family? For your friends?

Current and future realities

5. What are you doing now? Describe a day. Are you happy? Do you like life in Minnesota or/and would you like to return to your home? What is home to you now? Do you have suggestions for changing your educational experience? What would make it better or different?
6. What do you hope your future will be like in 5 years, 10 years, and 20 years? How can you accomplish these goals? Has your education prepared you for your goals?

Appendix F: Open-Ended Interview Questions/Story starters (Spanish)

Preguntas abiertas / arrancadores de la conversación

Antes de los Estados Unidos

1. Describe tu infancia ¿Dónde creciste? ¿Quién estaba en su familia? ¿Qué hiciste por diversión? ¿Qué ocupaciones tuvieron tus padres? ¿Fuiste a la escuela? ¿Cuando? Describa la escuela.
2. ¿Qué razones dio su familia decide venir a los Estados Unidos? ¿Minnesota? ¿Cómo te l tasa de venir? ¿A quién dejaste atrás? ¿De qué te entusiasaban? ¿Qué esperabas que pasara?

Educación a la llegada en los Estados Unidos

3. Cuando llegaste, ¿dónde vivías? ¿A dónde fuiste a la escuela? Describa cómo la vida / cultura / escuela fue / es diferente aquí de donde usted vino.
4. Describa cómo se sintió en la escuela en Minnesota. ¿Qué clase de clases tomaste? ¿Cuál fue / es la parte más difícil? ¿Cuál fue la parte más fácil? ¿Cuántos años estuvo en la escuela? ¿Cuán importante es ir a la escuela para usted? ¿Para su familia? ¿Para sus amigos?

Realidades actuales y futuras

5. ¿Que estas haciendo ahora? Describa un día. ¿Estás feliz? ¿Te gusta la vida en Minnesota o / y te gustaría volver a tu casa? ¿Qué es tu hogar ahora? ¿Tiene sugerencias para cambiar su experiencia educativa? ¿Qué lo haría mejor o diferente?
6. ¿Qué esperas que sea tu futuro en 5 años, 10 años y 20 años? ¿Cómo puede lograr estas metas? ¿Su educación le ha preparado para sus metas?

Appendix G: Open-Ended Interview Questions/Story starters (Somali)

Furan Su'aalaha / Sheekaysiga bilaabo

Ka hor Maraykanka

1. Sifee caruurnimadaada? Xaggee ayaad ku koray? Yaa ka tirsan qoyskaaga? Maxaad ku samaysay madadaalo? Waa maxay xirfadahee waalidiintaadu qabeen? Ma aaday dugsiga? Goorma? Sharax iskuulka.
2. Waa maxay sababta ma qoyskaaga ay go'aansadaan in ay yimaadaan si ay ugu es United Stat? Minnesota? Sidee sameeyey lacag aad loo ku saabsan soo socda? Yaad ka tagtay? Maxaad ku faraxday? Maxaad rajo ka qabtaa?

Waxbarashada marka la yimaado ee dalka Mareykanka

3. Markaad timid, xagee ayaad ku nooshahay? Xaggee ayaad tagtay dugsiga? Sharaxaad ka bixi sida nolosha / dhaqanka / dugsigaa / ay uga kala duwan yihiin meesha aad ka timid.
4. Sifee sida aad dareentay iskuulka Minnesota. Casharada nooc ee ah ayaad qaadatay? Maxay ahayd / qaybta ugu adag? Waa maxay qaybta ugu fudud? Meeqo sano ayaad adigu ama aad dhigatay dugsiga? Sidee ayuu muhiim u yahay dugsiga? Qoyskaaga? Saaxiibadaa?

Xaqiiqooyinka hadda iyo mustaqbalka

5. Maxaad hadda samaynaysaa? Sharax maalin. Ma faraxsan tahay? Miyaad jeceshay nolosha Minnesota ama aad jeclaan lahayd inaad ku noqoto gurigaaga? Maxaad guriga ku joogtaa hadda? Ma haysataa talo soo jeedin ku saabsan bedelida khibradaada waxbarasho? Maxay ka dhigi lahayd mid ka fiican ama ka duwan?
6. Maxaad rajeyneysaa mustaqbalka inuu noqon doono 5 sano, 10 sano, iyo 20 sano? Sidee ayaad u gaari kartaa hadafyadan? Waxbarashadaadu miyey kuu diyaarisay hadafyadaada?

Appendix H: Email to request teacher participation

I am contacting you today to see if you would be interested in participating in a research study. My study focuses on the stories of female immigrants in the United States regarding their lives before the United States, educational experiences, current life experiences, and hopes for the future. You have been identified as a teacher of SLIFE students.

The purpose of this qualitative narrative research study is to give a voice to young women who arrive in Minnesota as teenagers with limited English and limited education in their home country. I am also including the voices of the teachers who work with these women. Your experiences will provide insight into the education of SLIFE women. Through the SLIFE women's stories and yours, we can understand how to best service and equip SLIFE women as they navigate their new lives in Minnesota.

If you decide to participate, we will meet in a location determined by you for a 60-90-minute interview. The interview will be audio recorded. In the event clarifying questions are needed, I will contact you at a later date.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me at mdkeillor@gmail.com or 651-402-7726. I look forward to hearing your stories.

Sincerely,

Melanie

Appendix I: Informed Consent Form; Teacher



Consent Form

1046499-1 *Voices of SLIFE Women*

You are invited to participate in a research study about immigrant women's educational experiences in the United States. I invite you to participate in this research. You were selected as a possible participant because you are the teacher of female immigrants that came to the United States after age 14 with an interrupted education. The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision whether or not you would like to participate. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by doctoral student, Melanie Keillor, under the supervision of Dr. Sarah Noonan from the University of St. Thomas. This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of St. Thomas.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to learn about immigrant women's experiences in the United States educational systems. The United States is experiencing a growing number of teens entering school with little prior education. Students 14 and over, more than two years behind their age level peers academically, identify as students with limited or interrupted formal education or 'SLIFE', (Minn. Stat. § 124D.59, Subd. 2a). A majority of SLIFE students also identify as non-native English speakers with low or no literacy in their native or home language (DeCapua, 2016). The state of Minnesota estimates 15,000-25,000 SLIFE students attend Minnesota schools today, about 25% of the current ELL population. The purpose of this qualitative narrative research study is to give understanding to the young women who arrive in Minnesota as teenagers with limited English and limited education in their home country. By learning their stories, educators will understand their experiences, their view of the future, and how to best meet their needs, particularly among women. Through these stories, we can understand how to best service and equip these women for their new lives in Minnesota.

Procedures

If you agree to participate in this study, I will ask you to do the following things: You will participate in one 60-90 minute interview. I will ask you a variety of questions regarding your experiences with SLIFE women. You will be audiotaped during the interview. You will select the location for this interview. Contact information will be collected. If at any time additional follow-up is necessary, I will use this contact information. Follow up will be determined if clarification of previous statements is needed when I am doing analysis. I will interview between 2 to 3 teachers for this part of the study.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study

The study has no risks.

There are no direct benefits for participating in this study.

Privacy

Your privacy will be protected while you participate in this study. You will select a neutral location for the interview. The translator will sign Privacy forms and non-disclosure forms. You will select a pseudonym to be used throughout the research project. No names will be used during the interview. Your name and contact information will be collected and stored in a separate location for use of any follow up interviews.

Confidentiality

The records of this study will be kept confidential. In any sort of report I publish, I will not include information that will make it possible to identify you. The types of records I will create include audio recordings, transcripts, computer records, and data lists. Audio recordings will be stored on my password protected recording device. I will hire a professional transcriber to put the audio recording into a written format. You will remain anonymous during this process. This will be stored on my password protected computer. Your personal information such as name and contact information will be stored in a separate file electronically and in a locked safe. I will use the written-out interview to create categories and themes. This will be done electronically. All electronic data and paper documents will be stored in a locked cabinet in my home. All electronic data will be password protected. Only I will have access to these passwords. After the study is complete, all audio recordings will be deleted. All electronic data will be transferred to a USB file after the completion of the research study. This USB file as well as any paper files will be stored in a locked cabinet in my home. All consent forms will be included in this file. All signed consent forms will be kept for a minimum of three years upon completion of the study. Institutional Review Board officials at the University of St. Thomas reserve the right to inspect all research records to ensure compliance. I cannot guarantee confidentiality if someone reads this research and they recognize your unique story.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Melanie Keillor or the University of St. Thomas. There are no penalties or consequences if you choose not to participate. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Should you decide to withdraw, data collected about you will not be used. You can withdraw by verbally requesting to withdraw from the study. You are also free to skip any questions I may ask.

Contacts and Questions

My name is Melanie Keillor. You may ask any questions you have now and any time during or after the research procedures. If you have questions later, you may contact me at 651-402-7726 or mdkeillor@gmail.com. My advisor is Dr. Noonan, (651)962-4897. You may also contact the University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board at 651-962-6035 or muen0526@stthomas.edu with any questions or concerns.

Statement of Consent

I have had a conversation with the researcher about this study and have read the above information. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to participate in the study. I am at least 18 years of age. I give permission to be audio recorded during this study.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Signature of Study Participant

Date

Print Name of Study Participant

Signature of Researcher

Date

DeCapua, A. (2016, October 20). *Meeting the Needs of Students with limited/formal education*.
Lecture presented in St. Olaf College, Northfield.

Appendix J: Interview Questions; Teacher

TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Teacher's Background

What position do you currently have? What is your educational experience? How did you get interested in ELL students? SLIFE students?

Student Stories

Describe the story(s) of SLIFE students you have worked with. Where did they come from? Why did they come? What caused the interrupted education? How did they come? What are they facing now?

Student Academics

Describe the challenges SLIFE students face. What courses are they assigned? How many years do they attend school once they have arrived? What social and academic barriers do you observe?

Consider specific students. (Anonymous) What are their struggles? Are they aware of the United States educational expectations and steps to a career? How are they supported for post-secondary aspirations?

Hopes

What supports or programs do you see as most successful for SLIFE? What would you like to see implemented to support Minnesota SLIFE? What is not working, in your opinion?

Appendix K: Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement

Revised: 08/08/16

Institutional Review Board Grants and Research Office Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement

A. INSTRUCTIONS

Please read through the entirety of this form carefully before signing.

Electronic signatures are not valid for this form. After completing the required fields, please print and sign this form in blue or black ink. After this form has been signed by the transcriber, it should be given to the principal investigator of the research study for submission. After receiving the *Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement*, the principal investigator should scan and upload the signed form to their IRBNet project package.

The transcriber should keep a copy of the *Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement* for their records.

This agreement is for transcribers only. However, if your duties as a research assistant include transcription, you will need to review, sign, and submit the *Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement* as well as the *Research Assistant Confidentiality Agreement*. Confidentiality agreements can be found in the document library in IRBNet.

B. CONFIDENTIALITY OF A RESEARCH STUDY:

Confidentiality is the treatment and maintenance of information that an individual has disclosed in a relationship of trust and with the expectation that it will not be divulged to others in ways that are inconsistent with the understanding of the original disclosure (the consent form) without permission. Confidential information relating to human subjects in a research study may include, but is not limited to:

- ☐ Name, date of birth, age, sex, address, and contact information;
- ☐ Current contact details of family, guardian, etc.;
- ☐ Medical or educational history and/or records;
- ☐ Sexual lifestyle;
- ☐ Personal care issues;
- ☐ Service records and progress notes;
- ☐ Assessments or reports;
- ☐ Ethnic or racial origin;
- ☐ Political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs.

As a transcriber you will have access to research information (e.g. audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) that include confidential information. Many participants have only revealed information to investigators because principal investigators have assured participants that every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality. That is why it is of the utmost importance to maintain full confidentiality when conducting your duties as a transcriber during a research study. *Below is a list of expectations you will be required to adhere to as a transcriber. Please carefully review these expectations before signing this form.* 2

Revised: 08/08/16

C. EXPECTATIONS FOR A TRANSCRIBER

In order to maintain confidentiality, I agree to:

1. Keep all research information that is shared with me (e.g. audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) confidential by not discussing or sharing this information verbally or in any format with anyone other than the principal investigator of this study;
2. Ensure the security of research information (e.g. audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) while it is in my possession. This includes:
 - ☐ Using closed headphones when transcribing audio taped interviews;
 - ☐ Keeping all transcript documents and digitized interviews on a password protected computer with password-protected files;
 - ☐ Closing any transcription programs and documents when temporarily away from the computer;
 - ☐ Keeping any printed transcripts in a secure location such as a locked file cabinet;
 - ☐ Permanently deleting any digital communication containing the data.
3. Not make copies of research information (e.g. audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) unless specifically instructed to do so by the principal investigator;
4. Give all research information (e.g. audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) and research participant information, back to the principal investigator upon completion of my duties as a transcriber;
5. After discussing it with the principal investigator, erase or destroy all research information (e.g. audio or video recordings, DVDs/CDs, transcripts, data, etc.) that cannot be returned to the principal investigator upon completion of my duties as a transcriber.

Name of Transcriber:

IRBNet Tracking Number:

Title of Research Study:

Name of Principal Investigator:

By signing this form I acknowledge that I have reviewed, understand, and agree to adhere to the expectations for a transcriber described above. I agree to maintain confidentiality while performing my duties as a transcriber and recognize that failure to comply with these expectations may result in disciplinary action.

Signature of Transcriber Date

Print Name